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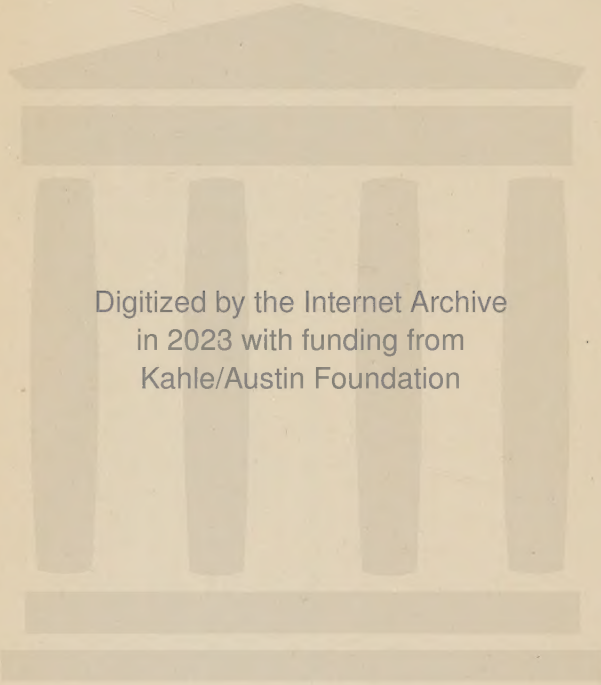
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# The Tip-Top Minstrel Book

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THE WILLIS N. BUGBEE CO.

SYRACUSE, N. Y.

## There's Money in a Minstrel Show

One of the easiest, and at the same time one of the pleasantest ways to raise funds is by means of a minstrel show. And by the way, do you know that minstrelsy, especially with amateurs, is on the "come-back"? Many church societies, clubs, fraternal organizations, etc., make the minstrel show an annual feature, and their patrons look forward to it with great anticipation and pleasure. How about your club or society? Does it need funds? Then why not get the boys together, work up a good old time "burnt cork opry?"

**The management** of a minstrel show should comprise the following:

**The Director-in-Chief**, who has general charge and oversight of the production.

**The Dramatic Director**, who has charge of the selection and training of the end men and interlocutor in the First-Part, as well as of those who take part in the dramatic parts of the show.

**The Musical Director**, who has charge of the songs, overtures and chorus work.

**The Business Manager**, whose duty is to provide scripts, costumes, tickets, hand-bills, window cards, and other accessories.

Subservient to him may be:

The Advertising Manager

The Property Man

**The Dramatis Personae** consists of the following:

**Interlocutor**, who should have a commanding and pleasing personality.

**End Men** (Four to eight in number) who render the gags, jokes and crossfire.

**Premier Endmen**, who are supposed to be the star performers and usually occupy the end chairs.

**Chorus, or Circle**, who assist in the musical part of the program but do not participate in the gags and crossfire.

**The Orchestra**. Not the least of the show by any means.

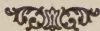


BUGBEE'S POPULAR BOOKS

# THE TIP-TOP MINSTREL BOOK

By

MONT HURST *and others*



THE WILLIS N. BUGBEE CO.  
SYRACUSE, N. Y.

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# **The Tip-Top Minstrel Book**

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## **A Few Hints for Putting on Minstrel Shows**

An ordinary minstrel show consists of three parts, namely: First Part, Olio and Afterpiece. Either of the last two may be omitted if desired. The first part comprises jokes and gags between Interlocutor and Endmen. These conversations are interspersed with songs. The olio may include short vaudeville stunts, talking acts, monologues or the like. The afterpiece consists of a darkey sketch or playlet of a brisk, breezy nature. Between each of these three parts should be a short interval with orchestra selection.

## **Kinds of Minstrels**

The minstrel show may be either black-face or white-face. It may consist of all male, all female or a mixed cast. It may be put on in the form of Irish Minstrels, Rube Minstrels, Military Minstrels, College Minstrels, or any other novelty form as desired.

## **Arrangement**

If the cast is arranged in the form of a semi-circle, the Interlocutor sits at rear center and the Endmen at each end or wing. However, a semi-circle is not absolutely necessary. The setting may be that of an old cabin dooryard, a southern levee, a barber shop, a country store, or one of a dozen other arrangements, depending on whether a conventional or novelty setting is desired.

## **The Cast**

First select some capable person as director, or stage manager, who will have entire charge of rehearsals and of the actual presentation. Select for the Interlocutor a person of erect bearing, good personal appearance, good voice and easy delivery. For Endmen select your best comedians. There may be two or four of these according to the abundance of talent and size of stage.

The remainder of the circle consists of soloists or singers seated between the Interlocutor and Endmen, and all evenly divided on each side of stage. The semi-circle may have any odd number from 11 to 17 or more persons, according to the size of stage. If a still larger cast is used a second circle for chorus may be formed back of the main one. The orchestra may be seated on stage back of singers on a raised platform or in the orchestra pit. The platform may be improvised by placing planks on saw-horses, but be sure that these are solidly constructed.

### **The First-Part**

First select a good opening and closing chorus for the first-part. Next arrange the jokes and gags to be used and have them thoroughly learned so that there will be no awkward hitches or delays to cause embarrassment and disaster. In selecting these be sure to use new and fresh material so that no one can say: "Oh, I've heard that before." A variety of songs should be selected as comedy songs for the Endmen and ballads, novelties, fox-trots, etc., for soloists and quartets. Of course everything should be thoroughly rehearsed again and again until satisfied that all perform their parts as nearly perfect as possible. Close with a dress rehearsal. When rehearsing the opening chorus, the Endmen should practice with tambourines until they can use them well and in unison. When the chorus closes these are of course to be laid aside.

### **The Olio**

In selecting material for the olio it would be hard to advise, not knowing the local talent available. You may have a good juggler, impersonator or other performer who may give exhibitions of his skill at this time. As a suggestion, however, any of the following might be given: darkey sermon, mind-reading (mock), a bit of "magic," talking act, monologue, etc. All of these may be found in "What to Do Between the Acts."

### **The Afterpiece**

Any good darkey play may be used. The following titles are only suggestions: "The Coonville 'Ristocrat Club," "Parson Jones' Donation," "Elder Jenkins' Reception," "Darktown Social Betterment S'ciety," "Duskyville Radio Club," etc. In this book will be found several good numbers for this purpose.

In selecting the afterpiece the same care should be used that would be exercised in selecting any play—to choose one that comes within the ability of the actors to perform. After the selection has been made be sure to assign the parts wisely so that there will be no misfits. It should be snappy and not too long, and should be thoroughly rehearsed so that it may go through without dragging.

## The Director

The director should be “boss” of the show at all times. He should be absolute master of the situation. He should have a definite plan and follow it without interference from members of the cast. Constant changing and altering contribute toward the failure of the enterprise. Insist that all attend rehearsals regularly and promptly and also to give attention to business while these are being conducted. Don’t allow levity. Drop those who cannot attend rehearsals or who do not take any interest in it. Do not overdo the matter by keeping them too long at rehearsals. Do not allow one part of the show to overshadow the other, such as the Endmen’s comedy to interfere with the songs, etc. It is well to remember that a shorter performance, well rehearsed, is far better than a long drawn-out affair only half prepared. Make it fast and snappy, and be sure to start promptly on time.

## Scenery and Properties

It is not necessary to have much scenery unless desired, or unless the setting is to represent some particular scheme, such as a levee scene, an old cabin, etc. If chair slips are not used, it is advisable to have all chairs uniform except the one used by the Interlocutor. These may be of the bent-wood variety or the wire chairs often seen in restaurants and ice cream parlors. As in the case of any entertainment all properties should be on hand ready for the opening of the performance.

## Make-Up and Costumes

As stated before, it is not necessary for all to black up. The Endmen should, however, be black-face. They should wear gloves, either white or black, instead of blacking the hands. It is preferable that all use some make-up even if not burnt cork. Do not blacken too closely to the lips. It gives a better effect.

Be careful not to get the black on the costumes. Better to do this before dressing up. Evening suits for men and evening gowns for women are the usual thing. Endmen, however, may wear more gaudy costumes with flaring collars, immense jewelry, etc.

### Final Word

There are dozens of "don'ts" that might be mentioned, but some of these would seem unnecessary if the performers are real ladies and gentlemen. These would refer to spitting and smoking on the stage during rehearsals, appearing in slovenly attire, not giving attention, giggling, etc. If everybody is willing to co-operate with the director and tries to do his or her part as well as possible, the show should be a success.



## Cross-Fire Jokes and Gags

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### Why Roosters Crow

By MONT HURST

INTERLOCUTOR. Well, how do you feel this evening, Mr. Bones.

END MAN. Ah feels jes' lak glue.

INTER. How's that?

END. Jes' stickin' aroun', stickin' aroun'.

INTER. Can you tell me why the roosters crow?

END. Dey crows for de same reason dat a man gives cigars away when dere's a new baby at his house.

INTER. Oh, I see. But why does the rooster crow before the hens get up?

END. He's jes' lak a man. It's about de only time he ever gits a chance to say anything.

INTER. What kind of fruit groows in nests?

END. Egg fruit!

INTER. Why did Methusaleh grow to be such a very old, old man?

END. Ha, dat's easy—because dere wasn't no autos in dose days.

INTER. Do you believe that Solomon had a thousand wives?

END. Ah does because he was a wise man and dey musta learned him a lot!

INTER. By the way, did you get a receipt for your payment on your flivver?

END. At fust I tole de man dat a receipt wasn't necessary, tole him dat de Lord was a witness to mah payment. Den he said he didn't believe in de Lord.

INTER. What did you say?

END. Ah says, "Well, Brudder, dat bein' de case ah spects you had better give me a receipt."

INTER. That's business.

END. Yeah, flivver business!

INTER. Do you think the flivvers are good autos?

END. Well, by dere works ye shall know dem!

INTER. Do you get many tires for your car?

END. Ah suttinly does! Ah gits tired out ebry time ah change de tires.

INTER. Does your auto have a good transmission?

END. It has. Why, dat car can transmit more trouble to me dan anything ah ever saw!

INTER. Does your engine ever miss?

END. Man, dat engine don't never miss giving me trouble.

INTER. How about the coils?

END. Which coils?

INTER. Do you have more than one set of coils?

END. Ah does. Ah has coils in de auto an' a certain copper coil up in de mountains. De auto coils drips grease an' de coils in de mountings drips somethin' else!

INTER. Do you take your girl riding?

END. Yas suh.

INTER. How's your motometer?

END. Ah didn't have to Go To Meet 'Er. She come to meet me!

INTER. Aw, you're all mixed up.

END. Dat's what de baker said to de dough!

## Why Women Paint

By MONT HURST

INTER. Mr. Bones, can you tell me why women use so much powder and paint?

END. Dey is always going to war. De powder am used to blow up impressions and de paint am used in de camouflage corps!

INTER. Very well! Say, I hear that you fought in the war.

END. Man, ah wuz right where shells wuz de thickest!

INTER. Where was that?

END. In de kitchen helping de cooks break eggs!

INTER. Did you capture any prisoners?

END. Oh, man, you am talkin' to de champion prisoner catcher!

INTER. Tell us about it.

END. 'Twas a dark an' stormy night. Ah jes' slipped over to de ——— enemy trenches, an' told 'em ah wuz takin' charge. Dey jes' laid dere and didn't say a word. Ah told 'em to stay dere until ah could go an' git mah men to take 'em back to mah camp. Dey stayed an' ah soon come back with mah men.

INTER. Oh, come, come! You don't mean to sit there and tell me that those men just stayed there and didn't even resist you. Your story is rotten!

END. Dey wuz dead!

INTER. Ha, I knew there was a catch in it. What was your favorite weapon?

END. A New Orleans razoo!

INTER. Oh, come! You know a razor can't do much damage to an opposing army.

END. Man, you ain't never seen no razoo in action when an experienced operator like mahself has charge of it!

INTER. You must be very proficient with a razor!

END. You are talkin' to one ob de most proficientest men who ever broke up a gathering with a razoo!

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### Not Exactly a Cowboy

By MONT HURST

INTER. I hear that you used to be a cowboy.

END. Ah was. Ony ah was a drugsto' cowboy.

INTER. I was mistaken. I thought that maybe you rode fence in the great open spaces!

END. Well, ah hab rode some fence in mah time.

INTER. Just what do you mean?

END. Well, dey rode me on a fence rail right outa town once.

INTER. What for?

END. For savin' a sweetheart!

INTER. I don't get you. Elucidate clearly.

END. Ah means dat ah saved another man's sweetheart from gettin' in trouble. Ah ast her to marry me! She slapped mah jaws and said ah insulted her by astin'. Dat was when ah rode de fence.

INTER. They must think a lot about you in your old home town.

END. Yas, yas, no doubt dey's wonderin' where ah'm at!

INTER. When are you going back to the old home town?

END. Ah'm goin' back when snow falls in July!

INTER. In other words, you abhor the thought!



END. Man, you hab so stated it correctly an' efervescently, not to say specifically!

INTER. I hear you do a lot of studying.

END. Oh, yas, I hab been studyin' two problems lately dat hab about got mah nanny!

INTER. What have you been worried about?

END. Ah'm tryin' to find out what makes wild flowers wild an' what makes pet hobbies tame! As a sideline ah'm tryin' to figger out if a broken heart can be repaired in a welding shop.

INTER. Very perplexing I'm sure! Most extraordinary!

END. Ah knows how ah'll find out as soon as ah finds a certain party.

INTER. Who is this party that can answer your questions?

END. A fellow by name o' Statistics. Ah didn't ever find out what his first name am.

INTER. What makes you think that this fellow can tell you?

END. He's de smartest man in de world!

INTER. How do you know?

END. Well, don't you ever hear folks sayin' dat something is de truth accordin' to Statistics? An' dey says "Statistics has it" an' ah knows dat Mr. Statistics am a smart man!

INTER. Ha! ha! So you really believe that there is such a man by that name?

END. Man, ah know it! Don't ah see his name in de papers most ebry day? Read de papers! Read de papers, sah!

INTER. You are getting too wild. I'll see you again after I talk to a sane man! Au Revoir!

END. Aw de war nothin'! De war am over! You can't fool me!

## The Lady at the Beach

By MONT HURST

INTER. Who was that lady I saw you with on the beach last night, Mr. Bones?

END. Dat wasn't any lady—she wuz yo' wife!

INTER. Impossible—my wife was at her mother's last night!

END. Yes, but ah married her mama las' night and we all went to de beach to celebrate!

INTER. My, my, but my mother-in-law will lead you an unhappy life!

END. Mebbe so, but she won't hab any bed ob roses to gambol in herself. Ah'm a man what is able to take care of hisse'f!

INTER. You look like you haven't been doing it lately. You look peaked.

END. Ah hab had a horrific case of OLDRALGIA.

INTER. You mean neuralgia.

END. No, ah means OLDRalgia.

INTER. Hmm, I never heard of OLDRalgia.

END. Well, ah caught it from an old man. Dat's why ah calls it OLDRalgia, and ef ah had caught it from a young man, why nacherally it would hab been Newralgia!

INTER. But tell me, how did you come to get in jail last week?

END. Man, ah nebber come to get in no jail. Dey had to come for me after ah fitted a pipe aroun' Joe Dack's neck.

INTER. And why did you do that?

END. He said my mouf looked like a fishes mouf.

INTER. Well, that's nothing to get mad about.

END. Yes, but he said dat it looked like a mud cat's.

INTER. I don't get the drift yet.

END. Well sah, a mud cat is yellow!

INTER. Really, I didn't know that you indulged in fisticuffs!

END. Ah ain't had any hiccoughs dat ah knows of.

INTER. I see that your vocabulary is nil.

END. Mah capillary may be ill but mah appetite am okay.

INTER. Do you believe in the Fourth Dimension?

END. Ah believes in every convenshun'.

INTER. I hear that you have obtained a radio.

END. Ah obtained it, but de man whut owns it wouldn't stand fo' it, so I had to take it back to him.

INTER. What is your opinion of radio?

END. It am jes' lak a woman.

INTER. How's that?

END. Well, ef eberything is right, den it will ~~work~~, but if eberything is wrong it won't. You hab to persuade a radio jes' lak a woman and de main thing about de battery is dat you hab to charge it. Dat's also de main thing 'bout a woman—Charge It!

INTER. Well, can you tell me why a chicken crosses the road?

END. Because dere's a drugstore across de road and dat's where her sheik hangs out!

INTER. Well, I must be going. My time is up. I hope to see you again.

END. Dat's what de man said when dey hung him.

## Buying a Mule

By MONT HURST

INTER. Mr. Hambone, they tell me that you purchased a mule today.

END. That's what ah thought ah was buyin' but ah believe ah bought trouble!

INTER. How can it be?

END. Well, ah ain't had nothin' but trouble ever since that mule come on mah place. First, he throws me, then he kicks me, and to wind up everything he bites me!

INTER. That's too bad. Is the mule thorough in all he does?

END. That mule am the thoroughest animal you ever see!

INTER. Well, thoroughness is a virtue!

END. This mule's thoroughness may be a virtue, but it's trouble to all parties involved, which happen to be me!

INTER. Come, come, you shouldn't grumble. Why don't you remember the old song that says "Let Angels Prostrate Fall?"

END. Yas, ah do. An' ah'll guarantee that when the Angels play aroun' dis mule dey'll fall prostrate alright!

INTER. You shouldn't talk like that. Look on the bright things in life.

END. All the bright things ah ever look at since ah bought dat mule am de bright shinin' stars jes' after he gits through with me!

INTER. Every cloud has a silver lining.

END. Yeah, an' every mule has a kick in him!

INTER. Are you going to enter the mule in the races?



END. De only thing ah'll ever enter dat mule in will be a race to de crossin' wif de railroad train, an ah'll hope de race will be a tie!

INTER. Just think—just think—that poor mule was once a baby mule!

END. Ah'll bet dat he gave his mama a lot of trouble!

INTER. Probably he never had a chance when he was young. Maybe his environment was not all that it should have been.

END. Maybe his IN-vironment wasn't much, but ah'll bet he was brought up wif some wild zebras or hyenas!

INTER. Your intelligence is nil, null and void!

END. Ah accept de compliment.

---

## A Shooting Affair

By MONT HURST

INTER. I hear that you witnessed a shooting affair last evening, Mr. Bones.

END. Ah only got one glimpse of the beginning of that shootin' affair!

INTER. I believe you are a brave man. Tell me, you didn't run when the shooting began, did you?

END. Naw, sir—not exactly.

INTER. Tell me—what did you do at the first shot?

END. Ah took mah presence away from there!

INTER. Did you run?

END. Naw, sir.

INTER. Well—what did you do?

END. *Ah jes' kinder loped away!*

INTER. Ha! ha!—so you were frightened?

END. Naw, ah was jes' scared ah might get excited!

INTER. It must have been a wild time when the shooting began.

END. Man, it were a wild time! Why, de shots de woman fired wuz eben wild, and never hit her man!

INTER. Ah, so it was a man she was shooting at?

END. Didn't you know dat it's a man, it's a man, ebery time! (*singing voice.*)

INTER. Why was she shooting at her man?

END. Because she *loved* him!

INTER. How do you know?

END. Well—wasn't she tryin' to put him out ob his misery?

INTER. So the fellow was lucky and escaped, eh?

END. Yas, suh—fo de time bein'.

INTER. Why—what do you mean?

END. She wants to shoot him because she loves him, an' you know dat love will find a way!

---

### Look Out for the Ladies

By MONT HURST

INTER. How do you feel this evening, Mr. Jambo?

END. Ah feels jest lak corn after harvest.

INTER. And how's that?

END. ALL IN.

INTER. Well, well, I'm sorry. What seems to be the diagnosis?

END. Ah don't know what de Dy-Agnosis am, but de symptoms am lak I'm gonna croak-us!

INTER. Come, come, surely it is not as bad as that.

END. It's worse.

INTER. I'm sorry to hear it. But—can you tell me how far away you are from being married?

END. Man, ah'm so close to it dat ah catch mahself takin' off mah shoes befo' goin' in my room at night!

INTER. Then you must have been married before?

END. One time only.

INTER. Did she pass away?

END. Naw, sir, she didn't *pass* away; she *went* away!

INTER. For good?

END. Ah hopes so!

INTER. Did she go with happiness?

END. Naw, sir, she went wif Happy Johnson!

INTER. Aren't you thinking he'll be taken aback when he finds out about her temper?

END. De only thing ah'm afraid of is dat he might bring her back!

INTER. Were you sad?

END. Naw, sir, ah wuz glad!

INTER. Couldn't you hold her love?

END. Ah could hold her love alright, but ah couldn't hold her fists!

INTER. Could she fight?

END. Fight? Why, man, dat woman used to do shadow-boxin' an' she would work them fists so fast dat she would be waitin' for her shadow to come around!

INTER. She must have led you a rattling life.

END. Battlin' is right!

INTER. So you now are going to marry again? Is your divorce decree final?

END. Ah don't think so. Ah spect ah'll git two or three more before ah'm laid on de shelf.

INTER. Then you don't figure on settling down?

END. Naw suh, ah specs ah'll hafta stay in circulation fo' awhile longer.

INTER. Well, the ladies do lead one a merry life.

END. Yes, and a weary strife.

---

### A Musical Affair

By MONT HURST

INTER. Sambo, I hear you're quite a musician.

END. Man, I'm nothin' else except—

INTER. Tell me—do you harmonize?

END. Say, I've been in perfect tune ever since I swallowed a tunin' fork.

INTER. Do you favor Liszt?

END. I wuz born that way.

INTER. What way?

END. With a lisp!

INTER. What is your favorite instrument?

END. The shoe horn!

INTER. Come, come! No kidding! How on earth would you play a shoe horn?

END. With the tongue!

INTER. Now, now, you're taking things in a light vein.

END. No I ain't! Mah veins am all dark and you know it.

INTER. Do you play the scales?

END. I generally fishes around with 'em. I catch onto 'em onst in a while!

INTER. Catch what?

END. Fish wif scales!

INTER. Do you have a knowledge of all musical instruments?

END. Well, I have picked one that ah like.

INTER. What particular instrument did you pick?

END. The banjo!

INTER. Do you know the different keys?

END. Like a night watchman!

INTER. Do you enjoy medleys?

END. Man, ah does mah share of it!

INTER. Your share of what?

END. MEDDLIN'.

INTER. Do you run the scales often?

END. Naw, but ah runs up alleys quite often!

INTER. Well, I can easily see that you are full of levity this evening!

END. G'wan! Man, dey tole me it wuz spring watah!

INTER. Oh, I mean you're full of fun. Levity means practically the same thing.

END. Well, levity am de soul ob wit!

INTER. Ah, I see you're a philosopher!

END. Man, ah nebber tole a lie in mah life!

INTER. Well, you'd be a better man if you had your life to live over.

END. Yes sah, an' Ah'd be havin' plenty ob company!

## Moral Suasion

By MONT HURST

INTER. Well, well, and how do you feel this evening, Mr. Crabtree?

END. Ah feels jes' lak Evolution!

INTER. And how is that?

END. Everybody am talkin' 'bout me!

INTER. That's too bad! I hope they're saying nice things about you.

END. Well, suh, the things they are sayin' 'bout me won't exactly be a recommendation!

INTER. Well, let's hope so. By the way, I hear that your uncle passed away and left you a large estate.

END. He did so, but he left it on condition that mah wife and me git a dy-vorce. That woman wouldn't quit me for nothin'. Why she sticks to me like mustard plaster.

INTER. Perhaps you can talk her into a divorce?

END. Man, if there's any talkin' to be done she does it! The only thing I ever talked her into was beating me with a wash-board, and I was tryin' to cool her down at the time!

INTER. Have you used moral suasion?

END. Huh, that woman ain't got no morals at all!

INTER. Well, where there's a will there's a way

END. Yes, an' where there's a woman there's a one-way mind.

INTER. Why, I thought you liked the ladies!

END. I do, but mah wife ain't no lady!

INTER. Here, you should be ashamed of yourself talking about your dear wife that way. Why—why, I'm surprised at you, really I am, it gives me a feeling of sadness!



END. Boo, hoo, boo, hoo, if she ever crowned you wif a meat cleaver like she did me, it would give you a feelin' of soreness.

INTER. But you care for her, don't you?

END. Yes! Just like I care for consumption!

INTER. In other words, you hate her?

END. You have ejaculated it puffictly!

INTER. What do your children think of all this?

END. They think jes' like I do.

INTER. Why?

END. Because ah use that moral suasion on 'em plus a elm switch.

---

### A Ladies' Man

By MONT HURST

INTER. Well, how do you feel this evening, Mr. Jambo?

END. Ah feels jes' lak a bum sewing machine.

INTER. And how's that?

END. Ripping! Ripping!

INTER. They tell me that you are quite a ladies' man.

END. Yas suh! Me an' de ladies is jest lak salt an' pepper, an' ham an' aigs.

INTER. And how's that?

END. In-Separable! In-Separable!

INTER. Tell me, do you believe that love worketh miracles?

END. Ah do!

INTER. Why do you believe that?

END. Well—if Queen Isabella hadn't of loved Chris Colombo, you woulda been diggin' potatoes an' peat outer some bog in Ireland, whilst ah woulda been shooing monkeys and lions off'n me in sunburnt Africa!

INTER. Right you are! I see that you are a well read man.

END. Ah can do it quite often.

INTER. Do what?

END. See red!

INTER. What do you think about the theory of relativity?

END. Ah thinks it's posolutely awful!

INTER. What do you mean? Elucidate a little more clearly.

END. When a gang of relatives comes up to mah house for meals about seven times a week, dey acts jest like a thunderin' herd and almost stampedes when dey eats biscuits mah wife hab cooked! Too much ob dat relative-ty business am gonna cause a ructure in mah fambly!

INTER. Ah, you misunderstand me. I'm speaking of Einstein and his views. We owe him a lot!

END. Ah bet ah owes him more dan anybody in dis town!

INTER. What do you mean?

END. Ah soaked mah watch an banjo to him last week!

INTER. To whom?

END. To Einstein! To Einstein! De man what runs de hockshop down on Main street!

INTER. You don't get my drift.

END. Naw suh. You'll hafta pull off another snow-storm!

INTER. I'm afraid you wouldn't comprehend.

END. Yas ah would, too!

INTER. You would what?

END. Come for a hen!

INTER. Ha! Ha! Your mental education has been sadly neglected!

END. Mebbe so, but mah dental vaccination am okay!

## A Tough Fellow

By MONT HURST

INTER. Well, how do you feel this evening, Mr. Hambo?

END. Ah feels jest lak a cannon and drum on de Foth of July.

INTER. How's that?

END. Bum! Bum!

INTER. Well, that's too bad. By the way, I hear that you were arrested the other day.

END. You am correc'.

INTER. Why were you arrested?

END. Mah feelins was hurt and ah told de world about it.

INTER. How were your feelings hurt?

END. Crackshot Washinton said dat ah wuz always havin' hallucinations an ah never was sick a day in mah life an furthermore ah never did eben hab symptoms ob it.

INTER. Well, why not forget it?

END. Aw, Wash is always sayin' things 'bout me an' ah am gittin' tired ob it. Ah tol' him an' de whole community to leave me be an' look out.

INTER. You must be pretty tough!

END. Man, ah'm so tough dat dey sharpens buzz saws on mah laig an' ah cut mah teeth on a barb-wire fence. Dey gimme a wagon wheel fo' a toof brush; dey gimme a iron railroad rail fo' a stick hawss an' ah played wif a tiger 'stead o' a kitten. Man, you am addressing a man what am really tough, accent on de U-G-H!

INTER. Surely you have some of the milk of human kindness in your makeup.

END. Ah don' use no makeup an' de only milk ah drinks am wild buffalo milk!

INTER. Well, I know of a fellow who is just as tough as you are.

END. Lead me to him! Dat's all ah ast. Lead me to him.

INTER. He lives in a cave with a bunch of rattlesnakes and wild hyenas.

END. Shucks, ah thought you knowed a tough man. Why, ah uster live in de same cave, but it got too tame fo' me. Ah wuz bored.

INTER. Well, if you are so tough I would like to hire you to wash an old octopus down at the zoo.

END. Er-mah time am all occupied mostly an' ah'm afraid ah cain't accommodate you. Ah'll jest look aroun' and get a boy to do it.

INTER. Oh, come, come. Surely you're not afraid?

END. No'm, ah'm not afraid, but ah jest hab remembered dat ah will be busy.

INTER. Oh, well. I just wanted to see how brave you were. Crackshot Washington has contracted to do the job. He's not afraid. Of course he don't know that it's a live octopus.

END. Well, you will find dat de contrac' will be broken!

INTER. Washington is a man of his word.

END. Ex-cept on Tuesdays, an' dis am Tuesday.

INTER. Well, I must away. I have a date to trip the light fantastic mongst the fern fronds with a big friend.

END. Well, you can trip over dem baskets all you want er mongst them dern ponds but ah'li jes' be throwin' a hoppin' hoof amongst th' dances at de lodge hall. Terpsichore am callin'.

## A Deal in Real Estate

INTER. Well, well, Rastus Shinbone, I sho' is s'prised to see yo'. How is yo', anyway?

END. I'se pretty fair to middlin'. How's yo'se'f?

INTER. I'se de same ol' sixpence. My, but yo're lookin' fine.

END. I's feelin' fine.

INTER. Yo're lookin' prosperous, too.

END. I is prosperous.

INTER. I sho' am glad to heah it. I remembah when we was down souf in Florida yo' was pore as dey make 'em.

END. Yes, sah, but I ain't no mo'.

INTER. An' dat shack yo' used to lib in wasn't fit fo' a hog to lib in.

END. Dat's right. It used to leak lak a riddle.

INTER. An' dar warn't no paint on de outside ob it.

END. An' 'twan't big 'nuff to put a tin lizzie in, no sah.

INTER. How come yo' be so prosperous, I lak to know?

END. It am jes' on account ob dat ol' shack.

INTER. How's dat?

END. Well, yo' see I sold dat ol' place las' month fo' fifteen tousand dollahs in cash. He! he! he! he!

INTER. Fifteen tousand dollahs?

END. Yes, sah, look at it. (*Holds up bank roll.*)

INTER. Golly, dat sho' looks good. Who bought de ol' ramshack?

END. I dunno who 'twas. Some woman in de norf wat got struck wif de boom. She ain't nebber seed de place yet. I reckon she gwine be awfully s'prised when she sees it. He! he! he! he!

INTER. Some woman in de norf, yo' say?

END. Yes, sah, some woman wat libs ober to——.

INTER. My hebbens! (*Puts hand to head.*)

END. What's de mattah?

INTER. Dat was my own wife wat bought yo' place.

END. Nebber min'. She ain't de only sucker in de norf been doin' de same ting.

---

### The Chicken on the Roost

INTER. Mose, wat does a chicken sleepin' on a roost wif its head undah its wing make yo' tink of?

END. A nice, big, juicy chicken pie.

INTER. Tut, tut, man, dat ain't wat I mean.

END. Wat does yo' mean?

INTER. I ain't speakin' ob no dead chicken.

END. Dat's all de kin' dat I can 'magine when I sees one wat am nice an' fat an' handy to get at.

INTER. Well, sah, I'se disgusted wif yo'. I refers to de signs ob peace an' contentment.

END. Jes' de same wif me. De mos' peace an' contentment I ebber see was in a chicken pie.

---

### Hot Dog

INTER. Well, Rastus, I s'pose you' went to de circus las' week.

END. C'ose I went to de circus. I nebber misses 'em.

INTER. Ah s'pose yo' saw all de animals wat was dar?

END. Yes sah, I saw all de animals, ebry one of 'em.

INTER. Dat's good. I reckon yo' don't membah all dere names.



END. No sah, but I 'membahs some ob 'em. Dar was de rhinocerhoss, de elerphant, de giraffus an'—an'—oh golly, I can't tell 'em all.

INTER. Did yo' see de one on de left, jes' inside de gate?

END. De one on de left jes' inside de gate?

INTER. Yes, de one wifout no head.

END. Wat's dat? An animal wifout no head?

INTER. Yes sah, de animal on de left wat didn't hab no head.

END. Yo'se suah got me stopped dis time. Wat was it?

INTER. Why, a *hot dog*.

---

### A Collision

INTER. Wat's de mattah wif yo' eye dis ebenin', Sambo?

END. I was in a collision.

INTER. Was it a automobile?

END. No sah, it was a rollin' pin.

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### The President's Cabinet

INTER. Rastus, can yo' tell wat de pres'dent's cabinet am fo'?

END. Yes sah, to keep his hooch in.

---

### The Evidence Was Gone

INTER. I hear yo' had com'ny las' night, Mr. Slim.

END. Yes sah, I had comp'ny las' night.

INTER. Ol' frien's ob yo'se?

END. No sah, not frien's—jes' acquaintances. Dey comes to see me quite offen.

INTER. Won't yo' tell us who dey were?

END. Yes sah, dey was de dry agents.

INTER. Did dey fin' anything?

END. No sah, case I glimpsed 'em fore dey got dere an' I done swallow ebryting in sight.

---

### Tips

INTER. I heahs yo'se a waitah now, Mr. Shinbone.

END. Yes sah, I'se a waitah.

INTER. Does yo' get many tips?

END. I sho' does.

INTER. Big ones?

END. Yes sah. I got a big one dis mawnin'. Oh boy!

INTER. How was dat?

END. I handed a man a rotten egg an' he tipped me so hard dat I mos' cracked my skull when I struck de flo'.

---

### Evolution

INTER. Rastus, does yo' belieb in evolution?

END. Yes sah, I sho' does..

INTER. Tell me what are some ob yo' reasons.

END. De principal reason is dat some folks ain't changed much from de 'riginal fo'fathers.

---

### The Handsomest Woman

INTER. ' Who was de han'somest woman ob her time? Can yo' answer me dat, Caesar?

END. Yes sah, I sho' does.

INTER. Well, who was it?

END. Eve, 'case dar warn't no odder woman in her time.

## Cross-Fire for Female Minstrels

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### The Homeliest Man in Town

INTER. Mrs. Pink, who am de homlies' man in dis town?  
Speak up quick.

END. Who am de homlies' man?

INTER. Yes um, who am de homlies' man?

END. I suah couldn't tell yo' case dar ain't no homely men  
in dis town.

INTER. Dar ain't no homely men in dis town?

END. Dat's wat I says.

INTER. How come dat? Say, is yo' married?

END. 'Deed I is not.

INTER. Dat splains it. Dey all looks good to yo'.

---

INTER. Mis' Bones, will yo' tell me who am de homlies'  
man?

END. Well now, I'se puzzled jes' as much de odder way.  
Dey is all so homely I don't know which one is wust.

INTER. But sho'ly dar must be one dat is homlier dan all  
de res'.

END. Mebbe dar is—lemme see. Dar's ——— an' ———,  
but I dunno which is wusser.

INTER. Say, is yo' married?

END. No ma'am, I isn't—not yet.

INTER. Dat splains it. Yo'se been smitten.

END. Smitten? Wat's dat?

INTER. Yo'se got de mitten from all de men folks.

END. No sah, I ain't said I got it from all ob 'em—only paht of 'em.

INTER. I spect we bettah left it as Mis' Pink says—dey's all handsome—specially in de dark.

---

### The Cause of Absence

INTER. Mis' Black, how come yo' wasn't at de lodge meet-in' t'other night?

END. I couldn't come. My ol' man was pre-disposed.

INTER. Dat so?

END. Yes um, he was sufferin' excrutable pains.

INTER. How comes it?

END. Well, yo' see he done choke on a fly in his soup——

INTER. Umphm!

END. An' dat was de cause ob his swallowin' bof sets of his false teef.

INTER. My goodness sakes! Swallowed bof sets of teef?

END. Yes um, an' yo' see my ol' man hab got into such a habit ob grindin' his teef togedder dat——

INTER. So he grin's his teef, does he?

END. Jes' lak a sausage grinder or a flour mill. Well, when dem teef got togedder in his stommick dey done got to grindin' jes' from habit, an' dey done caused him de mos' exquisite pain in dat region.

INTER. I should say as much. Why didn't yo' send fo' de doctah?

END. We did send fo' de doctah but he wasn't home.

INTER. Too bad. Wat den?

END. Den we got a man wif a vacuum cleaner an' hitched it to his mouf an' drawed 'em bof right out.

### A Question of Age

INTER. Martha, I'se got a question or two to ax yo'.

END. Proceed wif de questionnaire.

INTER. Well, fust ting I wants to ax yo' when is yo' birf-day?

END. My birfday? Goodness sakes! I dunno when 'tis myse'f 'case some yeahs I has one an' some yeahs I don't.

INTER. Well, den, will you tell me how old yo' is?

END. Dat's one ting I ain't tellin' ebrybody, is my age.

INTER. It am bery important dat I fin's out jes' wat yo' age am an' when yo' birfday is.

END. I dunno how yo' gwine do it. Wat am de reason fo' it anyway? I'se ober twenty-one.

INTER. Well, I'll tell yo'. A frien' ob yo's done left a will dat gibs yo' ten thousand dollahs on yo' twenty-sebenth birfday.

END. A frien' wills me ten thousand dollahs?

INTER. Yes um, dat's wot I said.

END. On my twenty-sebenth birfday?

INTER. Precisely.

END. Golly, ain't dat funny now! I jes' membah dat my twenty-sebenth birfday am dis bery day. Whar does I go to get de money?

INTER. I'll send 'em around. Yo' jes' sit down an' wait a spell.

END. Now wat do yo' tink ob dat? All dat happen on my birfday—de only birfday I'se had dis yeah.

---

### Married Life

INTER. I hear yo' done gone an' got married, Mandy.

END. Yes um, de deed am done at las'.

INTER. How does yo' enjoy matrimonial bliss?

END. 'Deed I ain't had time to fin' out yet. It done take all my time to do de cookin'.

INTER. I don't see how it takes all yo' time to cook fo' jes' two pussons.

END. Two pussons? Who said I was cookin' fo' two pussons?

INTER. How many did yo' marry, I lak to know?

END. Nine.

INTER. My goodness! Nine pussons! Is yo' a biggermist?

END. No sah, I ain't no biggermist.

INTER. How come it, den?

END. Well, yo' see my ol' man was a widower wif six chil-luns an' his mudder an' brudder am thrown in fo' good measure.

INTER. Yo' suttinly has got yo' hands full.

END. I'se got my hands full tryin' to keep dem moufs full. Believe me dey's some eaters. Do you know, my modder-in-law weighs mos' tree hundred pounds in her bare feet, an' all jes' on account ob eatin'.

INTER. Well, yo' hab my sympathy, dat's de bes' I can do.

END. If any one asks yo', yo' can tell 'em dat married life ain't all de conjubial bliss dat some folks tries to make out. No ma'am.



## Jingles

CO. SCHOOLS  
C185743

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My Little Colahed Girl

I know a little colahed girl,  
Her name am Miss Amandy,  
An' wif dem goo-goo eyes ob hers  
She sho' am mighty handy.

She's got a mouf dat's nice an' sweet—  
Jes' waitin' fo' some kisses,  
An' when yo' tries to steal a smack  
Dar ain't no chance yo' misses.

Her form am plump as it can be,  
It's quite a ways around her;  
It sho' does tax de scales 'cause she's  
A good free hundred pounder.

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## Uncle Moses' Mule

Ol' Uncle Moses owned a mule,  
An ornery kin' ob cuss,  
An' eb'ry day he licked it so  
It kep' a gettin' wuss.

One day it kicked ol' Moses up—  
Clear to de moon, I bet,  
'Case dat was more'n a week ago  
An' he ain't come down yet.

---

## The Laziest Man

De lazies' man we'se got in town  
Is 'Rastus Ephr'm Snow—  
Yo'll fin' him settin' on a keg  
Down at de grocery sto'.

Mos' twenty yeahs or mo' he's been  
A settin' on dat keg,  
An' he ain't hatched out nuffin yet,  
Nor eben laid an egg.

---

### A Colahed Belle

I went to 'tend a pahty  
At Coonville t'other night,  
An' yo' should seen de colahed gals  
Oh golly, 'twas a sight!

Miss Arabella Jenkins was  
De hi-falutin' belle;  
She et a yeast cake 'fore she went  
An' dat's wat made her swell.

## Monologues

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### Convalescent Mose

(A Monologue for a Man.)

By LUCILE CRITES

*(Man sits propped up with pillows in a big chair, his feet upon the chair in front of him. He calls):*

Mary, Mary, whar am yo', nigger? . . . Come hyah a minute. (MARY is supposed to enter.) I done bin yellin' ma ole head off fo' a half a hour. . . . What does ah want? I wants ma breakfas' o' course. . . . Ain't ready yit? Well, I's done starved plum to deaf. Yo' ain't bin feedin' me on much o' nothin' fo' a month till I's so empty I's hardly hyah a tall. . . . What does ah want? . . . Toast? . . . No'm, I don't want no mo' toast frum now till de Judgment Day. Ef I thought dey wuz gwine serve me wid toast in Heaben, ah ain't sho' but what I'd go some udder place. . . . What does ah want, den? Now, yo' am axin' a sensible question. Ah wants hot cakes an' molasses—a whole fambly of 'em—not a stingy little one or two—an' fried sausage an' coffee an' some hard boiled eggs, two or three. . . . What? I kain't hab all dat? Why not? . . . Kase de doctor man won't lak hit? . . . Well, ah don't keer what de doctor man laks, dis order am not fo' him, but fo' me. Step lively now, woman. . . . Neber min' 'bout washin' ma face. Hit's bin washed so much since ah's bin sick dat hit's gittin' sorter faded lookin'. . . . Hurry up wid dem hot cakes, Mary. (MARY supposed to exit to next room. MOSE talks to himself.) Pore ole back! Lemme rub yo' honey. I's fraid yo' ain't neber gwine let ole Mose do no mo' wo'k. . . . What's dat yo' say, Mary? . . . De doctor man sez ma back am 'bout as good as new? Huh, he ain't neber fell off'n a load o' wood an' bin run ober by hit "to boot." I reckon ef dis back am fastened onto him, he gwine say different.

He don't know what ma ole back done sez to me. Mary, am yo' got ma breakfast ready? . . . Well, giunne my pipe den' Mary, ah craves de mawnin' papah wid ma pipe. . . . Much obliged. Mary, ah's done 'bout caved in frum hunger. . . . Well, what am yo' bin doin' all day? . . . Waitin' on me? . . . Huh, ah reckon yo' am bin a happier woman ef ah done fell up to Heaben when ah fell off'n dat wagon. Hit am a pity ef a woman kain't take keer of huh ole man when he am sick. Mary, whar am dat linament fo' my back? . . . Well, I kain't reach hit. Mary, ah's got a misery in ma chest. . . . Yas, I's wantin' de hot watah bottle. (*Sniffs the air.*) Lawdy, but dat cookin' smells lak Heaben to me. Well, woman, yo' am slow, but dat waitah full o' food looks lak ambrosia to Mose. Set de waitah on my lap. Nôw, fix ma pillows, woman' an' den go way an' don't bother me! Bless de Lawd fo' hot cakes. Yum, yum.

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## Noah and the Flood

### A Darkey Sermon

BREDREN AND SISTREN: I'se gwine to talk to you dis mawnin' about Noah an' de flood. De flood was an awful ting. It happened a good many yeahs ago, befo' I was born or yo' was born. It happened befo' de Johnstown flood. I'se asked lots of ol' timers an' dey don't remembah it, no sah. So I reckon 'twas a bery long time ago. De reason de Lawd made de flood was becuse de worl' done got so wicked. De women got to gossippin' an' slanderin' dere neighbors an' de men folks got to cheatin' in mule trades an' breakin' a lot mo' ob de commandments, so de Lawd sent de flood to wipe 'em all off de face ob de earth. But Noah was a good man an' his wife was an awful good woman. Noah nebber took his neighbor's wife to cabarets, nebber swore a blue streak, nebber put small taters in de bottom ob de basket—no sah. He was a bang-up good man. An' his wife always staid at home an' cooked de meals on de gas

stove an' used de vacuum cleaner on de parlor rugs an' nebber lied nor shoplifted nor run roun' wif odder men, no sah. She was a model wife an' if some ob yo' women done take a pattern aftah her yo'd do mighty well. So yo' see de Lawd done sized 'em up an' when he decided to hab de flood he tol' Noah to hunt up some high place somewhar an' take his wife an' den to go an' get two ob ebry kin' ob animal dar was—two dogs, two cats, two rattlesnakes, two possums, two crows, et cetera, an' so on. An' Noah done jes' as he was tole, though if 'twas me I reckon mebbe I'd fo'got some ob 'em such as de pole cat, de skeeters, de bed bugs an' some odders. But Noah he done got 'em all. Dat's why we'se got all dem critters wif us now. Well, ob co'se he had to hunt up a high place so he went to a real estate man an' de bes' place he could fin' was Mount Are-yo-at, which I tink was somewhar in Utah. He brung his wife an' dey looked it ober. It jes' suited 'em bof so Noah said "Dis ain de place we'se gwine to be at." Nex' dey went home an' packed up dere household goods an' got a lot ob food to last 'em fo' forty days, an' den dey rounded up de animals as I tole yo' befo'. It mus' hab kep' de railroads awful busy gettin' de stuff up dar. It was a good ting dey didn't hab no strike ob de trainmen or de section gang. I sho' would hab liked to seen all dem animals goin' up de gang plank into de ark. De story is dat dey all went in two by two—de elephant an' de kangaroo. Well, den de Lawd sent de rain—I tink it begun on St. Switchin's day—an' gracious how it poured! It kep it right up fo' fohty days an' fohty nights an' nebber let up at all. It was wuss den any rain yo' ebber saw. De watah kep' gettin' higher an' higher till it got right up to de ark, but ol' Noah wasn't afraid case de Lawd tole him he'd be all right. But all dem odder liahs an' cheaters an' crapshooters an' green goods men was drowned deader'n a do'nail. Dar wasn't nobody lef' in de worl' but jes' ol' Noah and his wife an' de animals. Ob c'ose dey didn't get lonesome up dar case it took so much time feedin' de animals an' keepin' de tigers an' lions an' sech like from fightin' each odder. Bimeby de rain stopped an' de watah went down. Den Noah

an' Mrs. Noah got out an' looked roun'. Dat sho' was an awful lookin' place. Dar wasn't no railroads runnin' case ebrybody was drowned. So dey had to clamber down de bes' way dey could. De worl' had been cleansed ob its sins case dar wasn't anybody to do any sinnin' but jes' dem two. But now look at it. It's wusser'n it was befo' de flood. Dey ain't been no man wat nebber tole a lie 'cept George Washington (an' myself). An' de way folks cheats nowdays is a caution. I jes' wanter say to yo' dat yo' bettah be careful. If yo' don't stop yo' sinnin' dar's suah gwine be anudder flood or sumpin' else dat am wusser. Bredren an' sistren, I hopes yo' take my advice befo' it am too late.

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## Ortermobiles

### A Monologue

*By* LUCILE CRITES

Howdy, Liza Anne, fin' yo' a seat. . . . Yas'um dis am me behin' dese bandages. Guess it am sorter ha'd to recognize me wif nothin' but one eye an' a corner o' ma mouf stickin' out. I'se not as handsom' as I wuz, but I's not complainin'. I's tellin' yo' all, Liza Anne, I's thankful to be hyar, after dat ortermobile accident. Yas'um, bress de good Lawd, I might a bin singin' hymns in heaben 'bout now. I's cured o' wantin' to be a high flyer, sho'. Yo' knows I's bin hankernin' fo' a ortermobile eber since dey done come in style. I pestered ma ole man all de time to git me one, an' no mattah what dat man bought me on ma birfday, Christmas, or ma weddin' addiverseries, I warn't satisfied. I kep' thinkin' how swell I'd look ridin' in a nice shiny car, 'stid walkin' long lak po' folks. So, since Ike got a fine job as shofer fo' dat rich Miss Pearson, he saved up a lot o' money, mos' two hundred dollahs an' wid what I'd put away, I thought now we kin' ford a car. I axed Ike if dey wuz ha'd to drive an' he said a baby could larn it, it wuz so easy.



Well, I went to see one o' dem second-hand clerks what sells Oberlins. It wuz 'bout three o'clock an' I told him I'd buy a car frum him ef he'd larn me how to drive it so's I could take it home by six o'clock. He promised, do' he looked lak he warn't feelin' well, when he done it, but he showed me a bright yaller one, an' he said I could hab it cheap, kase mos' folks don't lak de color, an' one fender wuz broke an' de self-statah didn't wo'k, but he said besides dat it wuz as good as new. He wuz a gran' talker, an' so handsom' I's proud to hab dat nigger larn me to drive. So aftah I paid him twenty-five dollahs fo' de fust 'stallment, an' promised to gib him ten dollahs ebery month as long as de money holes out, we got in. I mos' swelled up an' busted, I wuz dat vain. I should a said I climmed in, fo' dat agent man had to crank de car fo' 'bout twenty minutes. I axed him if it war ha'd to do, an' he said no, it war good exercise fo' de muscles. Said it wuz only lazy folks what laked self-statahs. We went to de country 'kase de man said it war bettah den tryin' to larn in town whar somebody might git in our way. De agent tole me 'bout de switch, what connects up wid de gwine power. He showed me de crutch, de brakes, an' splained all 'bout de gears, high, low, an' mediatly. Oh, yas an' de horn, what I soon larned to blow to make de people know I's on de way, an' dey bettah look out. I kilt de engine mo' times dan I kin count, but de man said nobody larned to drive unless'n dey kilt de engine, so's I's right in style. I gotta long fine, 'cep'n I couldn't stay in de road. When I wuz 'bout to turn a cornah, I'd sorter fergit to turn de wheel, an' do' I meant to twist dat wheel roun' an' turn de cohnah, de ortermobile neber knowed what I's 'tendin' to do, an' hit went right on. Onct when I nebber had no understandin' wid ma wheel, 'bout a certain cornah, we run right into a fence an' killed a settin' hen what wuz on a nest full o' eggs. (Lak as not, dey wouldn't mo'n half hatched no how.) Dat drivin' teacher wuz so skeart his hair jes' riz up, but set still, Liza Anne, de worse ain't tole yit.

Anudder time I saw a man comin' in a wagon, an' I yelled at him to turn out, an' he sez to me, "Don't worry, you kin hab de road," an' sho' nuff he gimme all o' hit, an' got clean out on de sidewalk hisse'f. It jes' shows yo', Liza Anne, dat when folks is drivin' a ortermobile, eberybody am politer to 'em. Well, aftah while we wuz bofe purty nigh wore out an' I tole de agent dat I'd bettah get home an' cook suppah fo' ma ole man. He said he wuz willin' an' he'd bettah drive me home. Well I let him ontill we got 'bout a block or two from de house an' den I tole him to git out an' Id take her de rest o' de way. He stahted to argyfy wid me, but I said I done tole him at de beginnin' I wan't gwine to buy no car less'n he'd larn me to drive hit by six o'clock. He said he done his bes' but he wouldn't call me no expert driver yit. Howsomever I made him git out an' he went off, an' me wavin' to him, but he look skeart plum to deaf. When he wuz gone, I fergot what to do next' but de engine wuz still makin' a noise, so I 'sperimented an' sho' nuff off I stahted.

I seen a big truck comin' and I grabbed dat wheel to turn out, an' when she didn't turn far 'nuff, I tried to step on de brakes, but I mus' a step on de gas 'stid of de brakes, fo' de nex' thing I knew I woke up in der horspital, wid a hundred ya'ds o' bandages 'round me. Ike said de truck warn't hurt much but dey ain't nothin' left o' my new car 'cept a gasolene smell. I'm fraid I'll hab to pay fo' it anyhow, but Ike sez dat agent what lef' me to drive home by myse'f had ought to be put in de pen fo' near-murder. So, you see, Liza Anne, how come I ain't so crazy 'bout habin' no car, lak I wuz. Whilst I's gin settin' hyar, I's decided I'll jes' let ma ole feet take me whar I wants to go. Den I won't hab to worry 'bout no shiftin' o' gears an' brakes. Yas'm I'll be ma own self-statah from now on. Uh, uh.

## Kotched

By CLIFTON LORD

The telephone jangled discordantly. The coal black man seated in the disordered living room of Mammy Lucinda's boarding house, shifted his big feet where they rested on the table and turned his head slightly.

"Oh, Lucy!" he yelled, "De phone am ringin'."

Evidently Mammy was out of the house, for no one responded. The phone continued to ring.

"Confoun'," complained Mr. Zabe Coot as he got to his feet and shambled across the room. "Dese heah things is a plum noosance, dat's what dey is."

He raised the receiver to his ear and listened.

"Well, why doan yo' say somethin'?" he asked, after a moment.

"Yeah, dis heah is Ma Lucy's. Who dis?"

A surprised expression crept across the man's face.

"Dog-gone my hide, yo' doan mean to say dis heah is Napoleon Coot, my own nephew? Confoun'! What you doin' callin' up heah, Black Boy? Yo' wants to talk to me? Well, heah I is. Yeah, dis am me.

"Whah's I been dis six months? Yo' knows dog-gone well whah I'se been. Yeah, Napoleon, I'se been whah some folks I knows belongs, and dey ain't no thousand miles from heah, neither. I thunk erbout you lots a times, Black Boy, while I wuz up dar in de big house whah de sun doan nevah shine, an' I wonder den and I wonder now how it is you stays outen jail when yo' bettahs gits sent up. I'se knowed you, niggah, since you wuz knee-high to a toad-frog, prowlin' around de ash cans wid rags aroun' yo' toes and de seat outen yo' britches, an' yo' ain't nevah wuked none a-tall 'ceptin' de times me and yo' both wuz in de chain gang fo' shootin' craps.

"Yassah. How come it? Yo' has got me guessin' as de cat say to de rat dat turn aroun' and bite a chunk outen her tail. Yo' sho' has got one o' dem gen-u-wine rabbit footses, when you kin go erlong wearin' silk shuts and eatin' de best vittles dat de Greasy Grill done put out, while po' old, ignorant fool niggah me, who wucks mo' in one day dan yo' evah did, winds up in de big house dat's got only one way doahs.

"Napoleon, things up dar ain't what dey usta be, an' I doan mean dey's bettah. Boy, dey couldn't be no wusser.

"When I was dar de time befoh disun, dey wuz a sho' nuff warden dar dat would let you set aroun' and res' yo' self on Sundays anyhow, but now dey's a crazy man up dar what makes yo' git out on Sunday and play baseball or one o' dese new-fangled games dey call wolley balls. I ain't nevah been so tiah'd ob a man as I is ob dat warden and his ball games. And dat ain't de wust ob it. On Sunday nights dey has some fool, white man dat hab done swaller de dictionary, git up in de big room what dey calls de club, and talk by de hour to us fool niggahs erbout refo'min and such things like dat what no self-respectin' cullud gen'leman evah thunk ob.

"I wouldn't ob mind it so much if I had any business bein' dar. You needn't laugh, yo' burr-head, blue-gum coon! I'se speakin' de truf, so help me Lawd. No sah, I didn't hab no mo' business dar dan a houn' dog at a doodle-bug picnic.

"How did it come erbout? Well, dis-a-way. Yo' all knows dat I had one of de bes' jobs in dis town fo' a black-boy, drivin' de truck fo' de Landon Company, an' yo'll knows dat I was drug offen dat truck and shoved in de callaboose wid-out no warnin' a-tall. De beginnin' ob it all wuz when I got introduced to dat brown gal, Liza Williams, at de Hi-Faluter's Ball. Yo' seed dat gal, Napoleon, an' yo' know she wuz de sweetest lookin' berry on de bush. She struck me right in de gazukus, so I shine right up to her. I danced wid her a few times and den axed her if she would lak a ride in my truck, which I had sneaked from the ware-house unbeknownest to my boss. She

'lowed she would and so we rode dat dog-gone truck all ovah town, exceptin' de street whah my boss lib. Den we come back and sot outside and she talk and I talk and she talk and 'low dat she is a clock-fixah, what repaih de clocks what has stopped runnin'. Well, Napoleon, it didn't strike me den but it has lots a times since dat she wuz a clock-fixah sho' nuff, fo' she sho' did fix my clock befoah she got through wid me.

"After dat I wuz hangin' aroun' dat brown gal's home evah night. Yo' knows whah she lived, down by de Crematory in a house all to herself and her brothah, who wuz a no-count scala-wag, wusser'n yo' is, Napoleon, but he always gits out when I come so I didn't mind dat. Most always we would take a ride, dat is, if I had been able to sneak de truck out dat night.

"By 'n by she got me to delivah de clocks in de truck at night dat she done fixed durin' de day time. Dat sho' wuz some clock-fixin' gal. I got so stuck-up on her dat I would stop by dar durin' de day, and it wuzn't long befo' she had me delivah'in clocks in de day time. All de clocks in town must ob been offen de strike erbout dat time, fo' dar wuz some to delivah evah time I driv' up dar. And de customahs, Napoleon, dey wuz de toughest lookin' set ob clock ownahs dat evah has been. But dey always seemed to have lots a money and didn't kick none at dat gal's prices. Can you believe it, niggah, when I tells yo' dat gal charged as much as twenty dollahs fo' de fixin' ob one little clock?

"Yassah, hones' truf, cross my heart. But she wuz a neat wuckah, always de clocks would be done up nice in thick, brown papah an' sealed up wid sealin' wax.

"Things went on dat way fo' a month befo' I notice dat my boss, de shippin' clerk fo' de Landon Company, begun to look at his watch suspicious like evah time I come in from one ob dem clock delivah'in trips. He jacks me up two or three times fo' bein' slow, but I is so stuck-up on dis gal dar I doan pay no 'ten-shun, and keeps right on wid de clock business. Den one day

my back-bone melt and run right down into my number 'levens when I sees de boss, or somebody jest lak him, drivin' off in his ca'h as I comes outen de gal's house wid a clock undah both arms.

"Well, suh, I goes back to de ware-house tremblin' all ovah, but de boss doan say nothin', an' I doan say nothin', so after a day or two I goes on as befo'. De gal done promise to marrify wid me by dis time, anyhow, and 'low dat she am savin' up de clock money to buy us a little shack in dark-town.

"Erbout two weeks aftah seein' de boss outside de house, I comes an' gits two clocks what am to be delivah'ed way up on de odder side ob town. Liza wouldn't let me in dat time, sayin' dat she wuz undressed. She jest push de clocks through de openin' in de doah and den close it to jest a little crack, but she kiss me through de crack and dat make me feel good all ovah. Jest as I was fixin' to drive off she call and say: 'Honey, lamb, yo'all can keep de money dat you gits fo' dem clocks. Buy yo'self a weddin' suit.' And she slams de doah. So I drives all de way across town, jest as happy as a pickinenny wid a billy-goat to play wid, and delivahs de clocks. De man pay me foh-ty dollahs and shut de doah quick-like, but not quick enough, fo' jest befo' de doah slam, a policeman jump up from no whah and sticks his foot between de doah and de jamb. Anothah one grabs me by de collah and den anothah man dat ain't got no policeman suit grabs de money outen my hand and says: 'Well, we got you at last, Black-boy.'

"I look at him fo' a minute, and den I axed: 'What is yo' talkin' erbout, white man?' He laugh and doan say nothin'. Wid dat I gits mad. 'I'se a respectable cullud man I is,' I says. 'Cain't I delivah clocks if I wants to, so long as de boss doan kotch me?' I axed.

" 'Don't make a fool of yourself' says he. 'Remember that anything you say will be used against you.'



"Wid dat I gits to de p'int whah I cain't think. I decides dat everybody is crazy, me included. So I keeps quiet while dey carries me to de station house erlong wid de white man dat is havin' trouble wid his clocks, and dey brings de clocks.

"Yo' can believe it or not, Napoleon, but when dey unwraps dem clocks to show de Sargant dey ain't no clocks a-tall, but jest wooden boxes in de shape ob clocks and inside is a place all chiseled out jest fo' to fit a whiskey bottle. One is pint size and de othah is qua't, and when dey opens de bottles it sho' smell good. Dar I has been thirsty fo' a drink all de time I been delivahin' it all ovah town and dat wuz de fust smell I gits.

"I tells de Sargent all erbout it, fo' I is mad sho' nuff at de way dat brown gal an' her wuthless brothah made a fool ob me, but it ain't no use. De mens all jest lafft fit to die and tells me dat I is de biggest jass-ax dey evah did see if I is tellin' de truf and de biggest liar if I ain't.

"Erbout dat time heah comes a big bunch of mens all lookin' disappointed like and one ob dem says as how dat Williams wench done skipped town and got clean away, her and her wuthless brothah to boot.

"Dey keeps me in jail fo' a few days, hopin' to kotch dem, but dis pair has done been swallowed up. It seems dey has gone clean to Chiny, fo' dey cain't find hair nor hide ob 'em. Dey had went complete and hadn't left nothin' but a twenty gallon still in de house an' a few ob dem confoun' boxes.

"So, Napoleon, po' old me is left holdin' de sack, and de upshoot ob de whole gazukus is dat I gits six months in de big house fo' boot-laigin' when I ain't no mo' boot-laigah dan Pussy-feet Johnsing. And de wust is dat I doan git my job back. I wuz to see de boss yistiddy and he say dat he ain't hirin' no nig-gah dat is fool enough to delivah boot-laig fo' two months wid-



out knowin' it. He says dat if I wuz a sho' nuff boot-laigah dat he would have mo' respect fo' me. Did yo' evah heah de like, Napoleon, I axes yo'?

"But dat ain't all. I meets a niggah in de pen what knowed dem Williamses, and he say dat wuthless niggah what she claim is her brothah ain't no brothah a-tall, but her husband. Napoleon, I'se through wid wimmen. I'se quit. I'se finished. I'se completed. Why, Napoleon, if anothah brown gal evah so much as speak to me, I'se gwine spit right in her eye."

## Sketches

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### One House Too Many

By MONT HURST

#### CHARACTERS

SLEWFOOT HARKINS.....	<i>A searcher for miser's gold.</i>
FISHMOUTH MOSES.....	<i>A searcher for miser's gold.</i>
MISS MALVINA APPLETREE }	<i>Pupils of the Professor.</i>
MISS JERUSHA JELICO }	
MISS FANDANGO SPITTER }	
PROFESSOR HORSEHEAD.....	<i>A dramatic instructor.</i>

**LOCALE:** An old haunted house in Rabbit Hollow, Alabama. Slewfoot and Fishmouth, two lazy negroes, have heard that an old miser had once lived in the house and have decided to go to the house that night and with axes and hammers, tear up the floors and walls in search of the gold that the miser has secreted in the old house. While there, Professor Horsehead, colored dramatic teacher, comes in, accompanied by the three colored girls, bent on rehearsing a ghost scene for their coming play. They go to the house because of its secrecy. The play is being staged for the Brothers and Sisters of The Silver Hand Society. Slewfoot and Fishmouth mistake the actors for ghosts.

**SETTING:** *A room in the old haunted house. An old rickety table, a couple of old chairs. Otherwise bare. The setting requires no elaboration and almost any amateur or professional group of actors can put the setting in shape in short order and at very little expense. The acting time may run from fifteen to thirty minutes or more, depending upon the extra business.*

*The act opens with the stage darkened. The voices of SLEWFOOT and FISHMOUTH can be heard off stage. They argue as to which shall go into the old house first.*

**SLEWFOOT.** How comes it ah has to always go in fust? You always insists dat ah should take de fust step to de unknown.

FISHMOUTH. Aw, hush, nigger! Ah really believes dat you am scared.

SLEWFOOT. Naw ah ain't. Ah just hates to always be asked to be de one to try anythin' out! You knows ah ain't 'fraid ob nothin'. How comes you don't go in fust?

FISHMOUTH. Aw, ah just thought you wanted to take de lead. You is a born leader ob men! You hab dat bravery what mos' men lacks. Ah thought ah wuz honorin' you.

SLEWFOOT. Well, den bof of us will go in together.

*(They enter the room. SLEWFOOT carrying a lighted lantern and FISHMOUTH carrying a sack to carry the treasure in. FISHMOUTH also has an axe and SLEWFOOT a pick. Lights flash on as they enter with the lantern. The lantern is supposed to furnish the light. They look around, and hearing a little scraping on the ceiling, they grab each other and shake.)*

SLEWFOOT. Nigger, ah specks we better come heah some other time.

FISHMOUTH. Aw, Slewfoot, you ain't scared is you?

SLEWFOOT. Naw, ah ain't scared. *(He trembles all over.)*

FISHMOUTH. Ah specks we had better git busy an' git the treasure what de old miser lef' an' git outa heah.

SLEWFOOT. Ah second yo' motion ex-plicitly!

*(They put the lantern and sack on the table, get the pick and axe and start sounding the walls and floor. They finally loosen a plank from the wall and crawl through. While they are gone, the Professor enters with the girls. He has a script in his hand, and the girls have sheets on their arms.)*

PROFESSOR. Well, ladies, we are at last in our secret rehearsing place. We must have no interference and must get this ghost scene down perfect for the benefit play tomorrow night. I found this old place and knew that we would not be interrupted here. Put on your sheets and take your places and we will run through the scene.

*(The girls are putting on their sheets.)*

MISS MALVINA. I'm so glad that we have found a secret rehearsing place at last.

MISS JERUSHA. We will be undisturbed.

MISS FANDANGO. I'm so happy, too!

PROFESSOR. We will go through the scene as soon as you girls are ready.

*(The girls have their sheets on now.)*

PROFESSOR. Take your places, ladies.

*(They take their places. MISS FANDANGO sits in the chair. MISS JERUSHA stands over her with arms uplifted. MISS MALVINA stands behind them with her hands to her covered face as though she were weeping.)*

PROFESSOR. That's a fine pose, ladies. But wait, I forgot my notebook. I believe I left it in my flivver outside on the road. Hold that pose until I come back. That's a perfect pose and most properly interprets the tragic reunion of the ghostly sisters. Hold it until I come back. I won't be gone long.

*(They hold the pose and the PROFESSOR leaves the room. At this moment SLEWFOOT backs out through the opening in the wall. He is talking to FISHMOUTH and has his back to the ladies whom he hasn't seen yet.)*

SLEWFOOT. Who's afraid? Huh, nigger, you oughter know dat I ain't 'fraid ob no ghost. Ah wishes a ghost WOULD come in heah.

*(He then turns around and sees the three "ghosts" and dives back through the hole in the wall. Much laughter from the three ladies. SLEWFOOT then sticks his head through the opening, rubs his hands over his eyes and jerks his head back. SLEWFOOT and FISHMOUTH can be heard talking beyond the walls, Sotto voce.)*

SLEWFOOT. Ah thinks ah saw somethin'.

FISHMOUTH. You is gittin' scared ain't yuh?

SLEWFOOT. Ah tells you ah thinks ah saw somethin'.

FISHMOUTH. Lemme take a look and prove to you dat you am so scared dat you am seein' things.

(FISHMOUTH *sticks his head through the opening and jerks it back.*)

SLEWFOOT. Ghosts!

FISHMOUTH. Didn't ah tell you? Didn't ah tell you? Why did we ever come heah to git treasure? Oh, why didn't ah tend to mah own business!

SLEWFOOT. We hab got to git outa heah. Git away frum dat do'.

FISHMOUTH. Ah don' see no do'.

SLEWFOOT. Well, follow me an' you'll git thru some kind of do'.

FISHMOUTH. Ah wish ah wuz home in mah bed.

SLEWFOOT. Nigger, will you please hush.

(*They crawl through the opening. The "ghosts" are laughing. MISS JERUSHA moves toward the two scared men. They fall to the floor.*)

SLEWFOOT. Oh, feet, why do you do me lak you do? Git in motion! Oh, lawsy, feet git in motion!

FISHMOUTH. Feet carry me back to mah home! Strut yo' stuff!

MISS JERUSHA. I am your mother-in-law's ghost!

SLEWFOOT. Now, mama-in-law, you knows dat ah wuz a good boy to you! Please go away!

FISHMOUTH. Ah recommends dat he wuz a good boy. Oh, why did ah come to dis house?

MISS MALVINA. I am the ghost of Queen Lookey!

(SLEWFOOT and FISHMOUTH have their arms clasped around each other's neck. They are shaking with fear.)

SLEWFOOT. Well, lookey heah, Queen Lookey, will you please let me go home? I wanta go home! Oh, how ah yearns for mah own fireside! Queen Lookey, please lookey de other way!

MISS FANDANGO. I am the ghost of Ham!

FISHMOUTH. We is only a couple of eggs what wanta git away frum you, Ham!

MISS FANDANGO. Come to me!

MISS JERUSHA. No, come to me. I want to clasp my clammy hands around your neck. I love you!

MISS MALVINA. No, they are my sons!

(SLEWFOOT and FISHMOUTH fall to the floor. The three "ghosts" dance around them, singing, "Flee as a Bird to Your Mountain" slowly and with husky voices. SLEWFOOT and FISHMOUTH are shaking with fear and manage to crawl through the circle back into the hole. MISS MALVINA grabs the last one, SLEWFOOT, by the heel but he yells and gets away. Then after the two men disappear through the hole, the three ladies sit down and laugh. The voice of SLEWFOOT can be heard through the hole.)

SLEWFOOT. Oh, golly, oh gosh! Lissen to dem ghosts cackle! Oh, will you lissen!

FISHMOUTH. Ah don't wanta lissen, but ah heahs 'em. We has been in lotsa houses but we hab come in one house too many.

SLEWFOOT. Amen!

MISS MALVINA. Isn't that the funniest thing you ever saw?

MISS JERUSHA. It was very ludicrous.

MISS FANDANGO. 'Twas the funniest thing I ever saw and I was afraid that I would burst with laughter!

(*The PROFESSOR returns at this moment.*)

PROFESSOR. Well, ladies, I cannot find my book and suppose we shall just run through the scene once and come back tomorrow when I have my book. Take your places.

(*They take their places. The PROFESSOR closes and locks the door. Then they go through motions with their arms. SLEWFOOT crawls from the hole and takes a look. He darts back. The PROFESSOR is smearing red paint on his face and white shirt to look like blood. He then lies down on the floor and the ghosts stand around him. FISHMOUTH and SLEWFOOT crawl out of the hole.*)

SLEWFOOT. Oh, lawsy! A dead one! De ghosts am takin' his spirit away from heah!

FISHMOUTH. If we can only make de door we will be safe!

(*They tip-toe across the room toward the door. At that moment the PROFESSOR groans. SLEWFOOT and FISHMOUTH run toward the door and find it locked. They jerk and pull on it. They are groaning all the time and the "ghosts" are laughing loudly. Then the two negroes run all around the room, trying to find the hole in the wall but pass it each time.*)

SLEWFOOT. Oh, where is dat hole!

FISHMOUTH. Oh, ain't dis room got no way to git out of it?

SLEWFOOT. We are in de power ob de ghosts!

FISHMOUTH. Oh, will you hush up? No mention am necessary!

SLEWFOOT. Where is dat hole?

FISHMOUTH. I'm gonna hunt a new one!

FISHMOUTH (*discovering the opening*). Heah!

(*They dart through it. The PROFESSOR and the three girls are bursting with laughter.*)

MISS MALVINA. They came here to find the miser's gold.



MISS JERUSHA. They think we are sure-enough ghosts.

MISS FANDANGO. They are scared to death!

PROFESSOR. We will carry the joke on.

(SLEWFOOT *sticks his head through the opening.*)

SLEWFOOT. Oh, ghosts, why don't yo' go 'way and leave me 'lone?

FISHMOUTH. Ah wants to go home!

THE GHOSTS. We will all go home with you.

SLEWFOOT. If you do, you'll do some fast travelin'!

FISHMOUTH. You'll have to be hasty!

THE GHOSTS. We go where you go.

SLEWFOOT. Naw you don't!

FISHMOUTH. We don't need no company!

PROFESSOR. Come on out, boys, and meet the ghosts.

SLEWFOOT *and* FISHMOUTH. We don't wish to be inter-dooed to no ghosts!

PROFESSOR. They only want to be friendly with ~~you~~.

SLEWFOOT. We got plenty of friends.

FISHMOUTH. Oodles of 'em!

THE GHOSTS. We are going to play with you!

SLEWFOOT. We is too tired to play wif you!

FISHMOUTH. We will play hide-an-seek wif you. Yo' go hide and den seek us!

SLEWFOOT. Yes, go 'way an' hide like nice ghostes!

PROFESSOR. Yes, the ghosts will now hide.

THE GHOSTS (*in sepulchral tones*). We—will—hide!

SLEWFOOT. Oh, will you please hush talkin' in dat grave-yard tone ob voice?

FISHMOUTH. Will you go way an' hide so dat you can't find yo' way out?

SLEWFOOT. Lemme go home!

FISHMOUTH (*singing*). "Dere's no place lak home! Be it eber so tumbled up, dere's no place lak home!"

PROFESSOR. Death is only a dream.

SLEWFOOT. An' a bad one.

FISHMOUTH. Ah wish you wouldn't talk 'bout dyin'. Ah'm nearly dead now! Oh coffins, where is thy joy?

SLEWFOOT. Oh, graveyard, turn into a corn field!

(*The "GHOSTS" depart, leaving via the front door.*)

PROFESSOR. Come on out, boys; the ghosts have hidden themselves.

(*SLEWFOOT and FISHMOUTH crawl out through the hole.*)

SLEWFOOT. Didn't ah tell you dat dere wasn't no ghosts? We is safe. Didn't ah tell you dat you only thinks you seen ghosts?

FISHMOUTH. Hush up! You is scarder dan I am. You is de most prevaricatin' Ethiopian gent ah hab eber seen!

PROFESSOR. Boys, when you're ready the ghosts will be waitin' for you to hunt them.

SLEWFOOT. Dey is goin' to hab a long, long wait befo' ah hunts 'em!

FISHMOUTH. Yes, ah'm gonna hunt mah way home!

PROFESSOR. Won't you boys stay and watch me play with the ghosts?

SLEWFOOT. Ah got business at another place!

FISHMOUTH. Ah'm late now!

PROFESSOR. Try another house for your treasure hunting, boys, I am using this house just at present. I'm training some ghosts.

(SLEWFOOT and FISHMOUTH are in the door. As they leave they raise their hands and shakily stand there.)

SLEWFOOT and FISHMOUTH. We hab been in one house too many now! We don' need no treasure anyhow! From heah on out, dem ghosts can go one way an' whichever way dey goes, we goes de other way! We hab spoke. (*They leave the room.*)

#### CURTAIN

NOTE: *All characters save SLEWFOOT and FISHMOUTH can work in this act without blackface, if desired. More ghosts may be introduced and eerie noises may be effected. This will make the acting of SLEWFOOT and FISHMOUTH more ludicrous. The play will be more effective if the house is darkened and stage lights low. SLEWFOOT can be a small black and FISHMOUTH a tall "yellow" for contrast.*

## Ice-Water Every Hour

A Comedy

By RUTH CRONYN CAIRNS

SCENE: *Sleeping-car aisle, curtains drawn. Only one berth actually needed.*

CHARACTERS: JOHN HAYWARD and PORTER.

PORTER comes sauntering down the aisle. Sits down in seat at front.

PORTER. Sho' nuff, now, Ah'll wake up dat young gen'leman jus' as soon's hit's twelve o'clock. Dat's how de doctah said to do. He done tol' me dis yere man has right queeah spells at times, 'specially when he's trabelin', and he mus' hab a glass ob ice watah eb'ry houah. Hit's suhtinly a mighty cu'rus kind ob medicine, but Ah's not goin' to tak ainy chances. Ah don' want ainy crazy actions on mah cah, no suh. He was a right smaht lookin' doctah, and he 'peahed to think a heap ob dis young gen'leman when he told him good-by on de platfohm. He gin me two dollars, and Ah'll suah look aftah his friend. (*Yawns and looks at his watch.*) Hit's mos' twelve now, and time to staht de ice-watah. (*Exits for a moment. Reappears carrying a glass of water on a tray. Stops in front of a certain berth.*)

PORTER (*to himself*). De doctah tol' me not to pay ainy 'tention if de gen'leman didn't 'peah to want his ice-watah, but jus' to talk to him soothingly, dat's what he said, soothingly, lak' as how he was a li'l boy.

(*Reaches out and gently shakes mattress. A sound from within, as of someone mumbling in his sleep. PORTER shakes mattress harder.*)

HAYWARD (*from within*). Hello! What's wanted?

PORTER. Time fo' you' ice-watah, suh.

HAYWARD. Ice-water? You must be mistaken.

PORTER. No, suh, Ah's not mistaken, suh.

HAYWARD. But I did not order ice-water, nor did I ring.

PORTER. But Ah's don brung yo' some, suh.

HAYWARD. But I don't care to be waked out of a sound sleep to drink ice-water.

PORTER. Yas, suh. But (*wheedlingly*) jus' yo' drink dis glassful, suh.

HAYWARD. But I don't want the water, I'm telling you.

PORTER. Hit's a wahm night, suh.

HAYWARD. Oh, well, if this is some special attention on account of the weather, I'll drink it. (*Thrusts head and arm out from curtains, takes water and drinks it.*) Now clear out. (*Retires behind curtains.*)

PORTER. Yas, suh. Thank yo' suh! (*Carries tray out, then returns to front of car.*) Golly, he almos' done hab one ob dem spells. Ah jus' sabed him dat time. Now Ah'll jus' hab a li'l nap until time fo' de next' glass. Golly, Ah's earrin' mah money, Ah is. (*Sits down, pulls cap over eyes, and nods head in sleep. Wakes up presently, gives a start, and looks at watch.*)

PORTER. Golly, Ah mos' done fo'git dat time. Hit's one o'clock and time fo' nudder glass ob ice-watah. (*Disappears, and returns with glass of ice-water on tray. Stops in front of berth.*) Ah sho' hopes de gen'leman won't argify and wake up mah passengahs. (*Reaches behind curtains and shakes mattress. No sound. Waits a minute. Shakes again, vigorously.*) Time fo' yo' ice-watah, suh.

HAYWARD (*from within, angrily*). What in thunder is this all about? Great guns! Can't you let a fellow alone long enough for him to get a few winks of sleep? Get out of here!

PORTER. Hit's one o'clock, and time fo' yo' ice-watah, suh.

HAYWARD. Ice-water be damned! I'll drown you in ice-water if you wake me up again.

PORTER. Yas, suh. But drink hit jus' dis time, now, please, suh.

HAYWARD. Not on your life! Now clear out!

PORTER. Yas, suh. But yo'll wake up mah passengahs, suh, if yo' hollah so loud.

HAYWARD (*thrusting head out, and shouting*). Then they can help me throw you off the train. Now clear out before I soak you in your confounded ice-water. (*Starts to come out from behind the curtains.*)

PORTER (*scratching his head and rolling his eyes*). Golly, he am powahfu' obstrepahous. (*To HAYWARD.*) Yas, suh. But tak' jus' a li'l sip ob dis watah, suh. Hit'll cool yo' off, suh.

HAYWARD. Cool me off, you black villain! Say, what's your game? Here, take this, and leave me alone. (*Hands out coin, which PORTER pockets with a knowing grin.*) Give me that glass. You deserve to have it thrown at your head. (*Drinks it at a gulp.*) Now if you show your face around here again, you'll get drenched. Understand? (*Retires behind curtains.*)

PORTER. Yas, suh. (*Carries glass away, then returns and sits down.*) Golly, Ah'll be a glad niggah when dis night's done gone. He don't appeah to lak de ice-watah. Tak's a mighty lot ob 'spostulatin' and 'splainin' to mak' him tak' hit lak de doctah said. Ah ain't gwine to nevah promise to be a nuss ainy mo'. (*Settles down in chair and goes to sleep. Wakes up presently and looks at watch.*) Two o'clock. Ah'll sho' be a soaked niggah dis time. But if de gen'leman don' git his watah, he's mos' lakly to git a bad spell. Dat's what-all de doctah said. (*Disappears and comes back with tray and glass of water. His hand perceptibly trembles, so that he has difficulty in holding the tray. He hesitates as he approaches the berth, and makes several efforts to put out his other hand to shake the mattress. He finally shakes several times, very gently. No result. Then gives a big shake.*)

PORTER. Time fo' yo' ice-watah, suh.

HAYWARD (*parts curtains angrily, and begins to get out.*) Damnation! Say, idiot, are you waking up all the people in this car to thrust ice-water at them? Or am I the only victim of your benevolent persecution? Didn't I tell you to leave me alone the rest of the night?

PORTER. Yas, suh. But de watah am right good fo' yo', suh.

HAYWARD. I'll ice-water you! Give me that glass.

PORTER (*backing away with the water.*) Yas, suh. But jus' drink hit up, suh. Den yo's gwine to feel bettah, suh.

HAYWARD. Feel better? You lunatic, what are you talking about? Get out of here or you'll feel better yourself.

PORTER (*approaching again, timidly.*) Yas, suh. But tak jus' a swallah, please, suh.

HAYWARD. Not one drop! (*Starts threateningly from his berth.*) But I'll fix you.

PORTER (*retreating.*) But yo' fo'git de doctah's awdahs, suh.

HAYWARD. Doctor's orders?

PORTER. Yas, suh. Suhtinly, suh.

HAYWARD. What doctor? What orders?

PORTER. Yo' doctah, suh. Ah disremembah his name.

HAYWARD. Oh, you do? What were his orders? And what in the dickens have you got to do about it?

PORTER. Jus' drink yo' ice-watah, suh, and den Ah'll tell yo'.

HAYWARD. You'll tell me right now, you black rascal. (*Starts again to get out from behind the curtains.*)

PORTER (*hastily.*) Yas, suh. Yas, suh. Befo' de train lef' Portlan' he done tol' me 'bout yo' ice-watah eb'ry houah, and he gin' me special 'structions to bring hit to yo', so yo' keep well on de train.

HAYWARD. Keep well on the train! What did he say was the matter with me?

PORTER. Why, suh, he tol' me yo' hab dem queeh spells, and ice-watah is what you' hab to tak' to quiet youh nuhves. Yas, suh, dem's his wuhds.



*(A look of bewilderment on Hayward's face gives way to one of understanding. He goes off into gales of laughter, while the porter stands by grinning broadly.)*

PORTER. Is yo' habin' one ob dem spells, suh?

HAYWARD. Yes, a mild one. Oh, good Lord! *(Laughs again.)*

PORTER *(anxiously)*. Heah's de ice-watah, suh.

HAYWARD. All right. *(Drinks it.)* Now bring me a telegraph blank, and be quick about it.

PORTER. Yas, suh. *(Disappears. Returns with blank. HAYWARD writes furiously, and hands message to PORTER, then hands out a bill.)*

HAYWARD. Here, porter. Send this at the next telegraph station. And don't you bother me any more tonight. Three glasses of ice-water is all I ever need in one night. *(Retires behind his curtains, chuckling.)*

PORTER. Yas, suh. *(Carries tray out. Returns to front of car. Looks around to make sure HAYWARD is out of sight. Holds up telegram and reads it.)* "Prescription taken. Bettah guess dan mos' ob dem. Cuah complete. Tell de fellahs de laff is on me. Hayward." *(Scratches his head in a puzzled way.)* Golly, Ah cain' see no sense to dis, no how.

CURTAIN

## Rubber-Neck and Tippie

By WALTER SCOTT HASKELL

TIPPIE. Hello, Rubber-neck! Ain't seen you for'n age. Whar you been?

RUBBER-NECK. I jus' dropped down from Hell—ena, Montana. I's been 'gaged in de bankin' business up dah. I was de watchman. Glad to see ye, Tippie. (*Shakes hands effusively.*)

TIPPIE. Oh, you was in de bank, eh? Dah wan't no money layin' round was dah? (RUBBER-NECK looks confused.) Ah, ha! I suspicioned ye right away. Guess ye got it all right.

RUBBER-NECK (*indignantly*). Now Tippie don' you go to alludin' to things you don' know nothin' about. I ain't no thief, cause I didn't steal the whole bank. I never stole mor'n three hundred dollars in all my life. Why, I couldn't, I belong to the church.

TIPPIE (*thoughtfully*). When did you jine the gospel free-for-all race? I tinks you mus' be terribly handicapped, cause I see money stickin' out ob your pocket. You're sure you don' steal?

RUBBER-NECK (*confidentially*). Dar's some temptations dat even a pious coon couldn't well resist. Ob course I steal chickens. Anybody ob any respectability couldn't be 'spected to leab chickens all alone on de roost widout takin' 'em. Dat's different.

TIPPIE (*pulling a bill from the other's pocket where it protruded*). How about dis money? Did you get it honestly, ol' boy? Now don' lie.

RUBBER-NECK (*more confidential, whispers in companion's ear*). I got three hundred, an' I might a got more, if dey hadn't got on to me in de nick ob time.

TIPPIE (*interestingly*). Did dey cotch you?

RUBBER-NECK. Nary a cotch. But dah was trouble, an' I skipped de gutter. See?

TIPPIE (*admiring the greenbacks*). Dis looks like good money.

RUBBER-NECK. 'Tis, Tippie, 'tis good money. Dat's what makes me feel bad cause I didn't get more ob de same stuff.

(*Walk around.*)

TIPPIE. So you tought you'd come down to Frisco, eh?

RUBBER-NECK. Yep. 'Ribed las' night bout ten-leben o'clock. One ob dem News boy fellers fooled me wid de inflammation dat dey was growin' watermelyons out by de Cliff House. In course I knowed dah was lots ob water out dah, an' so I went wid a chum ob mine dat I met on Market street, an' we proved conclusively dat de boy lied. Dah wan't no water melyons.

TIPPIE. Why didn't you hab de guy arrested for tellin' de truf backwards?

RUBBER-NECK. 'Twan't conwinent, Tippie, 'twan't conwinent. De boy had skedadled, an' de las' car was gone. So we stayed out to de beach all night, an' in de mornin' we went ober to de Golden Gate Park to look at de improvements, an' we runs plum on to a big airship dat dey was buildin' on de Pan Handle. De guy dat was runnin' de show, he commenced to gas me right away. He said I better go whitewash my face so's 'twouldn't scare de airship. I told him to go put some shoe-black on his face so's people wouldn't think he was faintin' away on account ob bein' so white.

TIPPIE. What's he say?

RUBBER-NECK. He swelled up like a big over-grown toad an' said for me to get out ob de airship ground, an' get off from de earth. Now dat wan't funny at all, an' I just told him to go run a gas pipe to his fool head an' fill his ol' airship wid gas.

(*Walk around.*)

TIPPIE. Dey can't get much ahead ob you, Rubber-Neck, can dey?

RUBBER-NECK. No, boy, dat's right. Dey can't pull wool ober dis chile's eyes, not while he am lookin', for sure. But say, Tippie: what you doin' now for a livin'. You shovin' dat ol' whitewash brush yet?

TIPPIE. Oh, no; oh, no! Lef dat off long 'go. Didn't you hear 'bout me? Why, I'm de great unknown! I'se de poet ob de foothills! Yes, 'deed.

RUBBER-NECK. You poet? Ha, ha, ha! well, well, well; what next? Les hear you "Po", Tippie, les hear you "Po".

TIPPIE (*indignantly*). You fool nigger, you don't know nothin'!

RUBBER-NECK (*bristling up*). If I t'ought you mean dat I'd smash you in de jaw, an' pull yer nose right in front ob yer face, yer black ace ob spades!

TIPPIE (*temporizing*). Oh, don't get excited! I was jus' thinkin'.

RUBBER-NECK. Was you thinkin' bout dat "Po"? Ha, ha, ha! Dat "Po". (*Doubles up with mirth.*)

TIPPIE (*disgustedly*). You big fool nigger, you don' know nothin'!

RUBBER-NECK (*looking sober*). If I t'ought you mean dat, I'd——

TIPPIE. Don' get excited. We don' want hab no trouble. I was jus' thinkin' that if you don' mind I'll recite dat sweet ballad dat I composed on de occasion ob first meetin' wid my bes' girl.

RUBBER-NECK (*looking pleased*). Sure boy! Go ahead, I be delighted.

TIPPIE (*with exaggerated preparation*).

"De firs' time I seed my Maria,  
She sat by de ol' kitchen fire;  
I knowed she was sweet, by de smell ob her feet,  
De moment I got bery nigh her."

RUBBER-NECK (*enthusiastically*). Dat's great, Tippiel! Dat's great! You am a poet sure. (*Slaps Tippie on back until he catches his breath.*)

TIPPIE (*recovering his breath*). Hol' on, Rubber-Neck! hol' on! You're too previous. I ain't through yet! Dah's another verse.

RUBBER-NECK (*apologetically*). Oh' 'scuse me. (*Stands back and folds arms resignedly while Tippie resumes.*)

"De firs' time I seed my Maria,  
A sittin' down dah by de fire,  
Though greasy an' black, I gabe her a smack,  
An' she slobbered me back—  
Oh, we had a hot time by de fire."

(RUBBER-NECK *rushes up and embraces friend. They walk around and dance.*)

TIPPIE. Anythin' doin' down your way?

RUBBER-NECK (*ruminatingly*). Yep, lots doin'. Didn't I tell you 'bout dat difficulty wid de ol' man?

TIPPIE. Nope. Drive ahead. What was de trouble?

RUBBER-NECK. It was de breakin' out ob de war. I tol' pa I was gwine to enlist as a private, but would be a officer afore I got frow. Pa looked incredulous, an' snickered in my face. I didn't like de way he took de information, an' reproached him in de language ob a gentleman. I sed, "You dog-gone hayseed, what you snickerin' for? Don' you think I can go in de army?"

"You're too young, an' green," says Pa, "an' ignorant ob de art ob warfare."

"Why be I ignorant? Who tol' you I didn't know beans? Did somebody misrepresent my character? You don't seem to be quainted wid yer oldest an' smartest son. I bet ten dollars I can lick de stuffin' out ob any guy ob my size in less time than it takes a two year ol' sheep to wag her cordial appendage."

"Done," says Pa, reddenin' in de face. "I'm bout your size, lick me."

I was took a-back for a minute, cause I wan't spectin' Pa to spunk up like dat. Soon as I got mah second wind from de sprize I braced up to de ol' man an' sed I'd show him in a jiffy an' a half dat I could back up my words. Pon that my respected sire reached out an' pulled my nose. I was so mad that I threw my fist at him, an' he ducked an' give me a right hander that landed on my nose where he had pulled it. Then he hit me wid his left, then wid his right, then bof together. I seed stars an' garters four times. That ol' fool had taken boxin'

lessons in his younger days, an' he nebber tol' me 'bout it. It was mean ob him to fool me dat way. I t'ought he didn't know anythin' 'bout fightin' when I started de conflag, but when it war ended, it was different. I was afeard he would wear himself out, so I sed "Enough, Pa. I'll give you de ten."

Pa was loth to quit, an' sed he wanted to gib me good measure. He sed it hurt him to have to punish his oldest an' smartest son like dat, but he felt it his bonden duty to do de right ting. Jus' as he sed dat he lammed at me wid his fist, an' I dodged an' let his knuckle go against de gate post. He broke his arm in three places. It doubled him up so I had to laugh. De doctah charged Pa ten dollars to set his bones straight. Pa an' I didn't speak for long time after der fracas. We're real chummy now. You see Pa married de second time, an' his las' wife liked me better'n she did him. I took her off Pa's hands for ten dollars. He tinks de world ob me now. An' der world is just one bed ob roses. I'se tryin' to pick de flowers widout gettin' pricked wid de thorns."

(*Walks around*)

TIPPIE. I forgot t' tell you my ol' man's dead.

RUBBER-NECK (*looking astonished*). Sho! You don' say?

TIPPIE. Yey, Pa's dead all right. (*Pulls bandanna.*) You can't 'magine how I felt when dey lay pa in dat ol' hemlock coffin. An' ma, she felt wors'n I did. She almost cried.

RUBBER-NECK (*sympathetically*). I'se bery sorry, deed I be. Spect you'll hab to work now.

TIPPIE (*taking offense*). Me work! You don't understand, I'm de poet.

RUBBER-NECK. Oh, 'scuse me. Did your ol' man die ob some disease?

TIPPIE. Well, de doctah sed it was from ober-eatin'. You see pa contracted de eatin' habit when he was bery young, an' it was nottin' for him to eat thirteen meals a day, an' once or twice atween times. I tol' pa he was a ruinin' his health, an' ma she tol' pa, an' der doctah tol' pa, but pa thought he knew it all, an' he jus' kept on eatin' till he died. But jus' fore pa let go on

dis earth he comed to his senses for a minute, an' he sed if he had his life to live over he wouldn't eat mor'n six meals a day, an' seven on Sundays.

*(Walks around.)*

TIPPIE (*continuing*). 'Twas an owful sad occurrence, but we done do de right ting by pa. Me an' ma, an' brodder Ben went to his funeral, an' Ben he whistled to help out de choir when dey sung "Rocky Ages." An' ma she strewed some geraniums on pa's grave. Course I had to do somethin', so bein' I was a firs' class poet I composed a touchin' epitaph for pa's monument. Here tis:

"Here lies de ol' man, dead,  
Wid geraniums above his head.  
He'll neber more use dat ol' scoop,  
To fill his pod wid ox tail soup;  
He'll neber more eat turkey hot,  
Or Boston baked beans from de pot,  
Or tripe an' stew, or chicks dat crew—  
De ol' man's dead—gone up de flue.

*(Song and dance.)*



## Uncle Eben's S'prise Party

By WILLIS N. BUGBEE

### CHARACTERS

UNCLE EBEN, *who has the party*

AUNT DINAH, *his wife*

THOMAS JEFFERSON WHITEFOOT

GEORGE WASHINGTON CORNCOB

JEREMIAH Highbinder

ABSALOM MEEKER

MRS. MARTHA MEEKER

MRS. ELIZA Highbinder

MRS. GEORGIANNA WHITEFOOT

MISS ISABELLA TWOGOOD

MISS CAROLINA MAY LILYBUD

} Guests

TIME OF PLAYING: Thirty minutes.

### COSTUMES

Any ludicrous or extravagant costumes with flashy colors may be used. Mr. Meeker is rheumatic. Mrs. Highbinder is very stout.

SCENE: *Interior of UNCLE EBEN'S home. Plain wooden-bottom chairs, an old rocker or two and a cheap kitchen table constitute the furnishings.*

UNCLE EBEN and AUNT DINAH are discovered seated. As the curtain rises UNCLE EBEN has a severe fit of coughing and sneezing.

EBEN. Oh golly! I'se done got it dis time fo' suah.

DINAH (*entering*). I should say you had. Wharebber did yo' get sech a distemper as dat?

EBEN. I dunno, Dinah. I s'pect I done caught it in bed.

DINAH. Lan' sakes! How'd yo' catch col' in bed?

EBEN. Well, yo' see, I didn't hab bed blothes nuff on 'tother night an'—

DINAH. Den why didn't yo' get up an' put some more on? Dar was yo' old obercoat an' dat piece ob carpet yo' could a put on.

EBEN. Yes, I was gwinter but I done went to sleep an' fo'-got all about it. (*Coughs and sneezes as before.*)

DINAH. Shucks! Yo' know dat ain't de reason. Yo' knows yo' done caught it dat night when yo' got yo' feet wet goin' after dem water millions.

EBEN. Sh—! Dinah, don't let nobody heah yo' speak ob dem water millions.

DINAH. Den yo' shouldn't a got 'em.

EBEN. I knows it, I knows it, but somehow I jes' couldn't resis' de temptation.

DINAH. Well, den; you'se gotter soak yo' feet an' take a dose ob boneset tea, dat's wat yo' gotter do. Den yo'se gotter go to bed an' take a sweat an' see if yo' can get ober it.

EBEN. Don't yo' s'pose de boneset tea an' de sweat would be nuff, Dinah?

DINAH. No, sah, I don't s'pose dey would. Dey all goes togedder—one ain't no good 'thout t'other. 'Takin' all together dey can knock de grip all to smithereens.

EBEN. But Dinah, I—

DINAH. Dar ain't no "buts" about it. We can't take no chances on yo' gettin' pneumony or de epizootic case dey am awful expensive diseases. Yo' take off yo' shoes and stockin's while I goes an' gets de tub an' de watah. Does yo' heah me?

EBEN. Yes, yes, I heahs yo' all right. (*Exit DINAH.*) Grachus! Dinah am wusser'n a doctor. But I reckon I hab to do wat she says or dar'll be "Hail Columby" in de quarters.

(*Enter DINAH with tub which she places in front of EBEN.*)

DINAH. Dar now, get yo' big feet in dar while I go'n fetch de teakettle. (*Exit.*)

EBEN. Yes, Dinah (*puts feet in tub*). I s'pec's I'd hab to do it if she done tol' me to put my head in dar.

(*Re-enters DINAH with teakettle. Pours water in tub. EBEN jerks feet up quickly.*)

EBEN. Lawdy sakes! Dat watah am hot nuff to take de skin right off'n a rhinocerhoss.

DINAH. Co'se yo' wants it hot. 'Twouldn't do no good if 'twas cold.

EBEN. I knows dat, but needer would my feet be any good 'thout any skin on 'em. (*Makes great fuss over the water but finally gets feet into tub.*)

DINAH. Now, I'll jes' go'n get de hot stuff to put on de inside. (*Exit.*)

EBEN. De cure am wusser dan de disease but dar ain't no use ob argfyin' wif Dinah—she's as stubborn as a mule.

(*Enter DINAH with bowl of boneset.*)

DINAH. Heah now, yo' bettah get dis on de inside ob you jes' as quick as ebber yo' can.

EBEN. Yes um. Say, Dinah, s'posin' somebody should come. Wat I gwinter do?

DINAH. Shucks! Dar ain't nobody gwine come tonight. It am too dark.

EBEN. Mebbe some white folks come to see ~~about~~ dere washin'.

DINAH. Let 'em come. All dey'd see would be a pair ob big black feet.

EBEN. Or s'posin' de elder come fo' de money we fo'got to put in de contribution box.

DINAH. Lawsy me! Yo' don't nebber cotch him heah in de ebenin'. He am mos' suah to come when he smells de dinnah cookin'.

(*Sound of voices outside.*)

EBEN. Golly, heah come somebody now. How's I ebber gwinter get out of heah?

DINAH. Lan' sakes! Who can it be?

(*Enter MR. WHITEFOOT, followed by others.*)

MR. W. Heah we is, Uncle Eben. We's come to gib yo' a s'prise pahty.

EBEN and DINAH. Fo' de lan' sakes alibe!

MR. CORNCOB. Haw! haw! haw! Wat am de mattah, Uncle Eben?

MR. MEEKER. Am yo' tryin' to get some ob de soil off? Haw! haw! (*All laugh.*)

MR. HIGHBINDER. Reckon we suah did take yo' by s'prise, didn't we? (*All laugh heartily.*)

EBEN. No sah, I ain't soakin' no soil off. I'se done got de pleurisy in de win' pipe.

MR. HIGHBINDER. It am a mighty bad time ob de yeah fo' colds.

MISS LILYBUD. Dat's so. We'se all had colds to our house.

DINAH. He wouldn't had no cold if he hadn't gone out an' got his feet wet.

EBEN. Sh—Dinah! Dat ain't de reason 'tall. I done kicked de bed clothes off an' dat's how I cotched col'.

MOSES. De bes' remedy fo' a cold dat I know ob, is a table-spoon ob goose grease mixed wif a tablespoon ob castor ile, taken jes' fo' goin' to bed.

MISS TWOGOOD. I knows a bettah remedy dan dat. Take a half a teacupful of melted lard an' put in a little honey an' drink it down fo' times a day an' de cold will be all gone befo' de next' mornin'.

MR. MEEKER. A bowl ob red pepper tea on de inside an' a mustard plaster on de outside done beat 'em all.

EBEN. Don't tell any mo' remedies case Dinah she done make me take 'em all suah as preachin'.

DINAH. Lan' sakes! If I ain't done fo'got to ax yo' all to take off yo' tings an' sot down. I was so frustrated I didn't know what I'se about. We'se mighty glad to hab yo' come.

EBEN. Dat's a fac, we is. We is jes' as glad to hab yo' come as—as—as yo' is glad to be heah.

(*All lay off hats and wraps. AUNT DINAH piles them on chair in corner or carries them off the stage L. Meanwhile EBEN wipes feet with huge bandanna handkerchief, and proceeds to put socks and shoes on. Others take seats.*)

DINAH. Dar now, eberyone make yo'selves to home. (To EBEN.) Has yo' got froo wif de washtub, Ebenezzer?

EBEN. Can't yo' see I has? Dat hot water jes' drawed de cold right out. I don't reckon I need any mo' medicine. (DINAH carries off tub.)

MR. WHITEFOOT. I reckon yo' knows de 'casion fo' dis s'prise, don't yo', Uncle Eben?

EBEN (*scratching head*). Dat's jes' wat I'se tryin' to figure out.

MR. W. Why, it's on' count ob yo' burfday, of co'se.

EBEN. My burfday? Golly, dat's so. .

(*Enter DINAH.*)

Say Dinah, we clean fo'got all 'bout my burfday today. I'se fohty-seben yeahs old.

ALL. Fohty-seben?

DINAH. Fohty-seben? Yo'se fifty-seven yeahs old if you'se a day.

EBEN. How can dat be? Les see (*counts on fingers*). I had de measles when I was ten yeahs old—married my first wife when I was twenty-fibe an' we libed togedder fifteen yeahs till she died—that's thirty-fibe yeahs—

MISS LILYBUD. Dat's fohty yeahs, Uncle Eben.

EBEN. Yes, um, so 'tis. Den Dinah an' I got spliced an' we'se libed togedder in conjubial blissfulness eber since—seben-teen yeahs.

DINAH. Dat's right, I'se fifty-seben years ol' today but I don't feel no more'n twenty-seben.

MRS. H. So yo' see we done get up dis S'prise Party in honah ob de 'casion.

MISS TWOGOOD (*holding picture*). An' we wishes to present dis lil' gift to yo' as a token ob our esteem an' frien'ship. (*Hands picture to UNCLE EBEN.*)

EBEN. Bi golly! Wat yo' tink ob dat, Dinah? Ain't dat splendidferous!

DINAH. Dat suttinly am lubly.

EBEN. An' we tank yo' from de bottom ob our libbers.

DINAH. De bottom of wat?

EBEN. 'Scuse me, I mean de bottom ob our hearts.

MRS. H. Miss Lilybud has wrote a lil' poem specially fo' de 'casion, which she will now read.

(MISS LILYBUD *rises and reads poem.*)

MISS L.

I tells yo' bout our darkey frien'  
 An' dar sho'ly ain't no finah,  
 His name is Uncle Eben Jones—  
 His woman's name is Dinah.

We all ob us lub Encle Eb—  
 We lub his laugh so hearty;  
 His burfday comes dis bery night—  
 Dat's why we has dis party.

We hopes yo' all will do yo' part  
 Without no great persuasion  
 An' ebrybody dance an' sing  
 In honah ob de 'casion.

An' now I tells yo' all de truf—  
 His age am fifty-seben—  
 We hopes dar's many yeahs in sto'  
 For good ol' Uncle Eben.

MR. MEEKER. An' fo' Aunt Dinah too.

EBEN. I jes' lak to know who done tole yo' all my age?

CAROLINA. We looked it up in de records, Uncle Eben.

EBEN. In de p'lice records?

CAROLINA. Naw, not in de p'lice records. We foun' it whar it done gib de burfs.

EBEN. Dat soun's bettah. Say Dinah, hadn't yo' bettah clear away all de breakables an' gib 'em full swing ob de house?

DINAH. Dar ain't nuffin' breakable 'ceptin' dis picture an' de lamp.

EBEN. Well, yo' bettah leab de lamp.

MR. CORNCOB. Now wat am de fust ting we gwinter do to 'muse ourselves at dis pahty?

MOSES. Les hab some conundrums an' de ones wat don't gib conundrums has to sing.

MR. HIGHBINDER. Dat am fair nuff.

MOSES. Well den, heah am de fust one: Wat am de diff'-renec 'tween a safety razor an' a little goat?

MR. CORNCOB. Huh! A safety razor ain't nuffin' like a goat.

MR. MEEKER. We gibs up. Wat am de diff'rence twixt a safety razor an' a goat?

MOSES. Well sah, I can prove to yo' dat dar ain't no diff'rence.

MR. MEEKER. How's dat?

MOSES. Well, yo' see, a safety razor am a little shaver. A "little shaver" am also a pickaninny. A pickaninny am sometimes called a "kid," an' a kid am a little goat. Quinsequently, dar ain't no diff'rence 'tween a safety razor an' a little goat.

MRS. WHITEFOOT. I knows anudder one: Why am a burglar wat gets into yo' house at night a suah sign ob spring?

MRS. HIGHBINDER. Lan' sakes! I nebber knew a burglar was a sign ob spring befo'.

MRS. MEEKER. Needer did I.



MRS. H. Mos' likely it's case de windows would be open to let in de spring sunshine.

MRS. W. No sah, dat ain't it. It am case he is a robbin' an' a robin is a suah sign of spring, ain't it?

MOSES. Mrs. Meeker, it am yo' turn nex'.

MR. MEEKER. Yes sah, heah 'tis: Why am a lil' chicken jes' hatched out ob de shell like a mule's tail?

EBEN. A lil' chicken lak a mule's tail?

EBEN. Huh! I reckon case it's been set on so much.

MR. M. No, sah, dat' ain't it. It's case it hab nebber been seen befo'.

MOSES. Miss Lilybud am nex'.

MISS L. Lan' sakes, I nebber could think of one to sabe my gizzard.

MOSES. Well, den, yo' is booked to sing fo' us dis ebenin'. How 'bout yo', Mr. Corncob?

MR. CORNCOB. I spec's I gotter help Miss Lilybud sing.

MOSES. Den it am Miss Twogood's turn nex'.

MISS T. Why am an ol' maid like a one-legged man's shoe?

EBEN. Huh! We all knows dat! Case dar ain't needer one ob 'em got a mate.

MISS T. Yes sah, dat's it, an' dar ain't no likelihood ob her habin' one needer.

EBEN. Den yo' wants to look out yo' don't get to be one, Miss Twogood.

MR. W. Moses am gwinter look out fo' dat, ain't yo Moses?

MOSES. Yo' bet I is. Nex' am Mr. Meeker.

MR. M. Well den wat kin' ob animal would make a good trabeler?

MRS. W. Why, a camel, ob co'se, case it can go a long time wifout drinkin'.

MR. W. No, sah, dat wouldn't make a good trabeler 'tall.

MISS T. Den wat animal would make a good trabeler?

MR. M. An elephant, case he carries his Sartoga trunk 'long wid him.

MOSES. Now it am Mr. Highbinder's turn.

MR. H. I begs to be 'scused.

MRS. H. An' I allers does jes' as my husband does.

MOSES. Bery well, den we'll expect yo' bof to sing fo' us. I can see dat Mr. Whitefoot has one already fo' us.

MR. W. Yes sah, I has. Wat am de resemblance 'tween a dollah bill an' a pole cat?

MR. CORNCOB. Huh! I don't see no resemblance. I'll take de dollah bill an' yo' can hab de pole cat.

EBEN. Well, wat am de resemblance, Mr. Whitefoot?

MR. W. A dollah bill am a hundred cents, ain't it?

SEVERAL. Yes sah.

MR. W. An' I reckon a pole cat has jes' as many scents.

MR. H. I bet dat pole cat wat got undah our bedroom flo' an' stayed fo' free days las' summah had more dan fohty million scents.

MR. C. I reckon we bettah quit on dat. Say, Uncle Eben, how's yo' pleurisy in de win'pipe comin' on?

EBEN. 'Tain't comin', it's goin'. It am mos' gone already.

MR. C. Does yo' feel able to sing fo' us?

EBEN. Yes sah, if Dinah'll help me.

(EBEN and DINAH sing any darkey song.)

MOSES. Now wat about yo' folks dat didn't gib de conundrums? We'se waitin' fo de song.

(MR. and MRS. HIGHBINDER, MR. CORNCOB and MISS LILYBUD sing any good quartet.)

MRS. M. Miss Twogood, I heahs yo' am takin' lessons in hysterical torture.

MISS T. No, sah, not "hysterical torture"—it am physical culture.

EBEN. Am yo' doin' it fo' yo' health?

MISS T. No sah, I'se preparin' to gib instructions in it. Would yo' lak to hab me gib yo' folks a few instructions?

MR. M. Lan'! How's I gwine do it wib my rheumatiz?

MISS T. It am good fo' de rheumatiz—bettah dan hard cider or liniments.

MRS. H. An' I suah is too stout fo' such fool performance.

MISS T. Lots ob folks am takin' it jes' to rejuce dere weight. Now if yo' will all stan' up, all yo' has to do is to watch me an' do jes' as I does. I'll count one-two-free-foah, like dis. (*Shows motions and counts.*) Now ebrybody, ready! (*She executes any calisthenic movements such as finger tips on shoulders, extending arm sideward, upward, forward, etc., on four or eight count time. Following the arm movement she may give leg movement as follows: (1) raise knee to right angle; (2) extend foot forward; (3) return foot to position in 2; (4) resume standing position. Hands should be on hips during this exercise. A trunk movement may be given as follows: extend arms and bend body to left and right on two count time.*)

MR. MEEKER, MRS. Highbinder and others make ludicrous grimaces and exclamations during the exercises.)

MISS T. I spec's dat's enuff fo' dis time.

MR. M. Golly, I spec's it is.

MRS. H. I'se all out ob breaf.

MRS. M. We gets all dat kin' ob torture ober de washtub.

EBEN. Hadn't we bettah hab some refreshments, Dinah, aftah such strenuous business as dat?

DINAH. I'se got a pan ob fried cakes I done fried dis morn-in'. Yo' can hab some ob dose. (*Gets fried cakes and passes them around.*)

MOSES. Hi! Don't dem look scrumptious!

MR. H. Dey looks jes' as good as my ol' Mammy uster make.

MRS. H. Dey looks bettah case yo' ol' mammy couldn't make fried cakes fit for a pig to eat.

MR. C. Now while we'se refreshin' ourselves I jes' lak to ax a question an' hab yo' all gib yo' opinion on de subject. It am an old question dat has been argufied ebber since Adam an' Eve was in de Garden ob Eden.

MR. W. Mus' be a funny question not to be decided in all dat time. Wat am de question anyhow?

MR. C. De question is: "Am marriage a failure or isn't it?" Wat has yo' all to say on de subject?

MR. W. I has a lot to say. Marriage am a great institution. Dar is mo' people in de state of matermony dan in any odder state ob de Union. If you has nebber been in dat state yo' better hustle an' get into it quick's ebber yo' can.

MISS T. It seems to me dat ebrybody oughter get married if dey can scrape up money fo' de license, an' if dey can't dey oughter borrow it. Dat's my 'pinion.

MOSES. Does yo' tink I oughter borrow de money, Isabella?

MISS T. Yes sah, if yo' don't happen to hab it in yo' pocket.

MOSES. Mr. Highbinder, would yo' be so kin' as to loan me a quahter?

MR. H. I'se got one heah wif a hole in it I'll let you hab. (*Gets money.*)

MOSES (*takes money*). 'Tank yo'. I'll go down fo' breakfast tomorrow mornin' an' get de license.

MR. C. How does you' feel 'bout it, Miss Lilybud?

MISS L. I feels the same way as Miss Twogood.

MR. C. Den if Mr. Highbinder will loan me a quahter I'll go 'long wif yo' in de mornin', Mose.

MR. M. I'se jes' 'bout come to de conclusion dat marriage am a failure.

MR. W. Wat's de reason, Mr. Meeker?

MR. M. Well, yo' see my wife she done quit takin' in washin' so I'se had to go to work on de dump wagon. Tink ob it—a respectable niggah like me workin' on de dump wagon.

MRS. M. Dat's right. I'se tuk in washin' fo' de las' twenty yeahs. Now I'se come to de conclusion dat I'se gwinter take it easy fo' a spell an' let somebody else do de drudgin'.

MR. C. I say, le's take a vote on de subject. All does who tink marriage am a failure raise de right han'.

(MR. MEEKER *starts to raise hand.*)

MRS. M. Absalom Meeker! Yo' take yo' han' down.

MR. C. All dose dat tink marriage isn't a failure raise de lef' hand.

(*All raise hands except MR. M.*)

MRS. M. Absalom, yo' raise yo' lef' hand.

(*He raises hand.*)

MR. C. It am carried anonymously dat marriage am not a failure.

MOSES. Wat am de nex' ting? Let's ebrybody hab a cake-walk.

(*All clear floor and execute short cakewalk if desired. Another song may be given by quartet in place of cakewalk, if desired.*)

MRS. W. I reckon we all bettah be goin' home now. It am gettin' mos' bedtime fo' ol' folks like us.

MOSES. 'Tain't neah bedtime fo' us, is it Isabella?

MISS T. I should say not.

MRS. H. But we'se had a lubly time.

SEVERAL. Dat's right, we suah has.

MR. W. An' we wish de bes' kin' ob luck to Uncle Eben an' Aunt Dinah.

EBEN. An' we'd like to hab yo' all come again on my nex' burfday.

DINAH. An' as off'n as yo' can betwixt an' between times.

(*Exeunt with chorus of "good nights." Young people start up negro song.*)

CURTAIN









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